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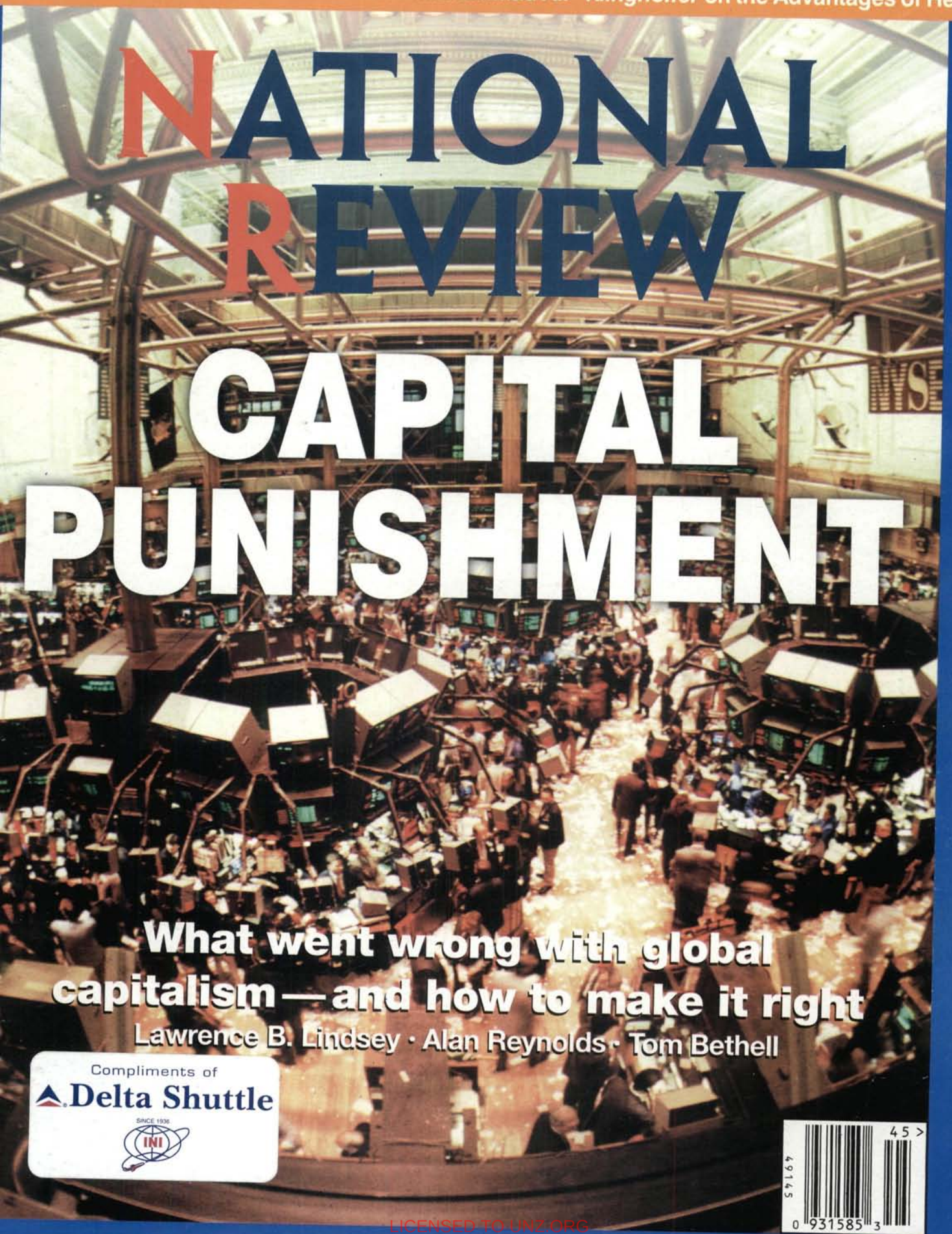

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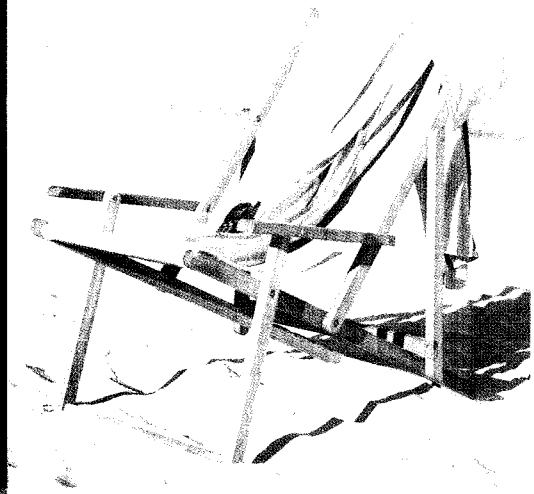

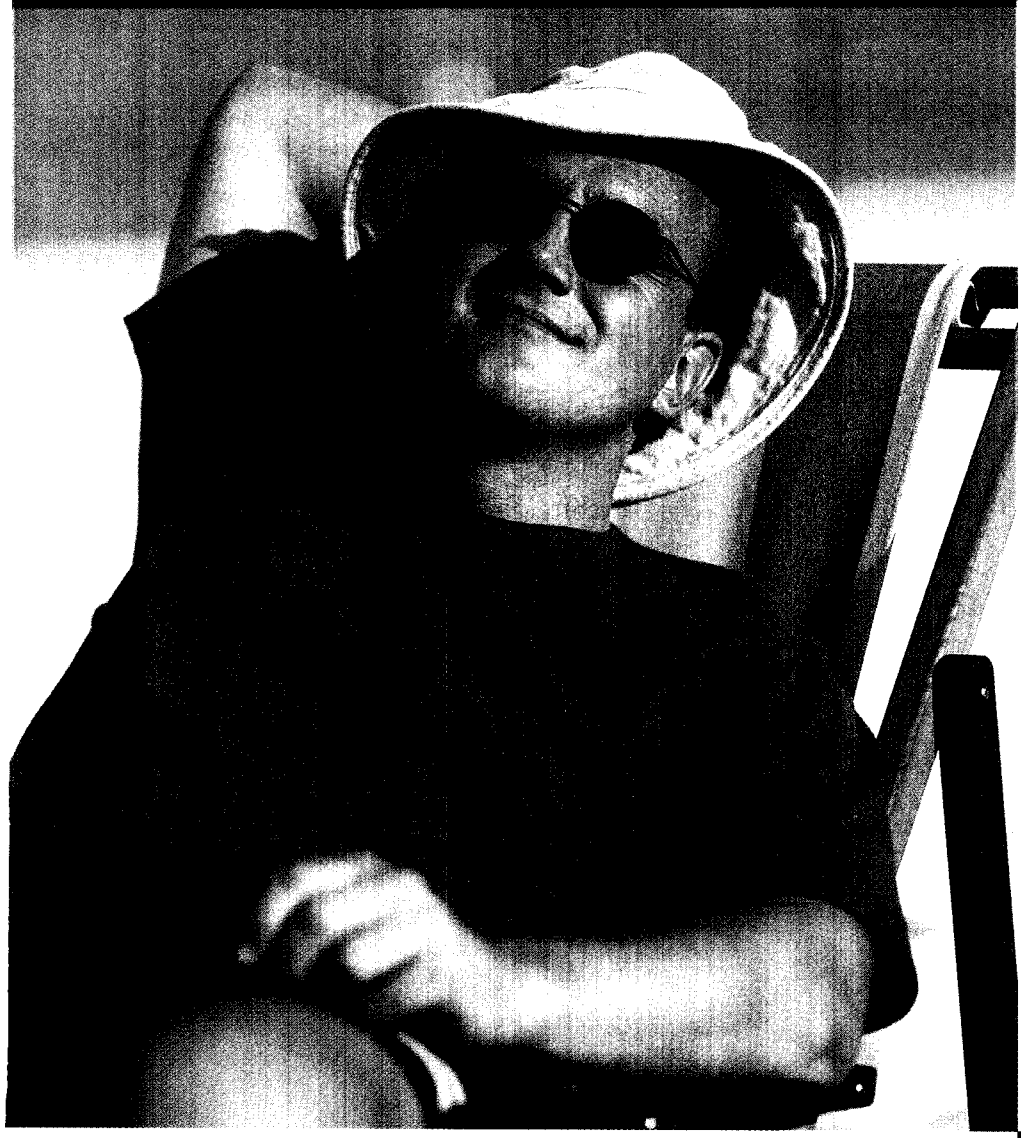

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■ LETTERS ■

Intoxicating

I am dismayed that a presumably responsible publication would include an article such as Eric Peters's "MADD House" [Sept. 28]. Mr. Peters asserts that drivers are not appreciably impaired at .08 BAC. One would therefore assume that Mr. Peters would be perfectly comfortable in a vehicle whose driver was at .08. However, Mr. Peters, and all other Americans, should consider that approximately forty thousand people are injured and a thousand killed each year by drivers who are impaired at that level.

Janet Cole
Wiscasset, Me.

Even as they commit a logical fallacy, MADD's campaigns go relatively unchallenged, because anyone opposing them is said to condone drunk driving. MADD assumes *a priori* that if anyone in an accident had a drink, then the mishap should be attributed to alcohol. Surely the vast majority of traffic accidents involve right-handed drivers, but no one would propose banning right-handed people from driving. I am not in favor of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and obviously in some instances this practice is the sole cause of a traffic tragedy. But I am also against dangerous driving no matter what the cause. The real culprit in traffic accidents is the rudeness and selfishness that pervade our society, and MADD has drawn our attention away from these root causes.

Joe B. Gambill
Dallas, Tex.

High Crimes

I read Matthew Scully's review of William Bennett's and Ann Coulter's books on Bill Clinton ["Sympathy for the Devil," Oct. 12], and thought I was reading a review in *Newsday*, the *New York Times*, or some other liberal paper. I was shocked and disappointed. You would think that NATIONAL REVIEW, a conservative magazine, would find someone to write a positive review, encouraging readers to go out and buy these books or get them from the library, as I did. Let's get on the ball, and maybe have someone write a positive review of these books in your next issue.

Peter Lantelme
Massapequa, N.Y.

Medal of Honor

Kudos to Robert Novak for his excellent profile of Sen. Bob Kerrey ["True Medal," Oct. 26]. However, the piece contained one important oversight. In suggesting that Kerrey is alone among potential presidential contenders in having provided courageous leadership in the Vietnam War, Mr. Novak overlooks Sen. John McCain, a Vietnam prisoner of war who endured constant torture and refused to betray his country. The heroism of Sens. Kerrey and McCain represents a welcome contrast to the behavior of the current occupant of the White House, but conservatives should not take solace in attacking Clinton's evasion of service. It is a sad commentary that most of the Republican candidates for 2000 also failed to wear their country's uniform. Indeed, this is an important reason to consider McCain for Commander-in-Chief.

Marshall Wittmann
Silver Spring, Md.

Hairpiece

Your September 28 "From the Editor" gives the impression that Rep. Inglis is likely to beat Sen. Hollings in South Carolina. If another six years of Fritz is objectionable to you, recall his appearance on *This Week with David Brinkley* a few years ago. When Sam Donaldson challenged Hollings on his support of textile quotas while wearing a suit purchased in Hong Kong, the Senator replied, "Why, Sam, I don't ask where you buy your toupees." Hollings is the only man I ever heard shut Sam up completely.

Jim Addison
Walterboro, S.C.

Anatomically Correct

Florence King's "The Misanthrope's Corner" is a favorite of mine, but her October 12 column contained a baffler: What in hell, pray tell us, is Princess Di's "potus"?

Harry W. Sanford
Gordonsville, Va.

We at NATIONAL REVIEW *don't use the slang words beginning with "p" to describe a certain portion of the male anatomy, so I made up one based on the Secret Service acronym POTUS, for President of the United States. I thought it sounded more ladylike, which is probably why nobody got it.—FK*

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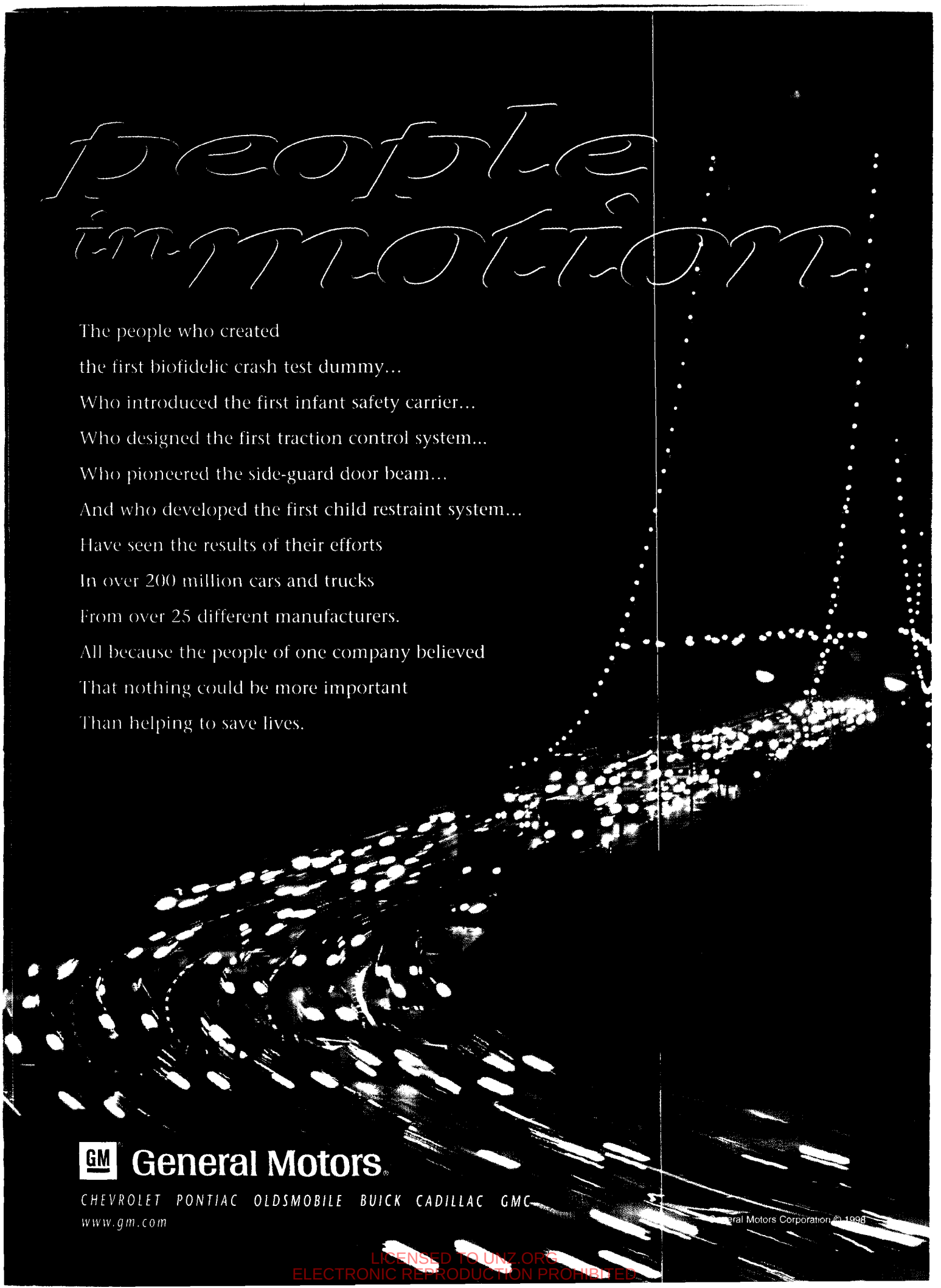
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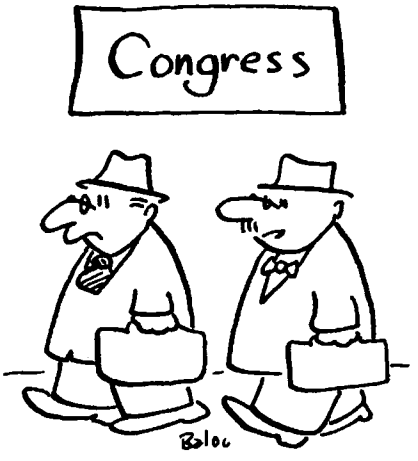
■ President **Clinton**, on Nov. 3 elections: "Our crowd is about to defy history. Our crowd is about to show that they don't want to be manipulated. Our crowd is about to say we've seen the last six years and we like it." . . . Fox News poll: 60 per cent believe Clinton would lie again; 52 per cent think if Clinton–**Lewinsky** scandal were a soap opera, it would be cancelled. . . . Clinton, as House approves impeachment inquiry in bipartisan vote: "It is not in my hands. It is in the hands of Congress and the people of this country—ultimately in the hands of God." . . . **Hillary Clinton** goes to Bulgaria for 23rd wedding anniversary—first time the first couple has spent special day apart since moving into White House.

■ Rep. **Mark Sanford** (R., S.C.) on budget deal, in *Washington Post*: "I remember reading all about these Christmas-tree bills before I came to Congress and being disgusted." . . . Rep. **Barney Frank** (D., Mass.): "People who voted Republican [in 1994] could probably bring a bait-and-switch suit against the GOP for pork barreling." . . . **Ron Utt** of Heritage Foundation: "This was a tour de force for the President." . . . **Thomas Mann** of Brookings Institution, in *New York Times*: "It really is quite amazing that at a point of seeming weakness and vulnerability, when he is the target of only the third impeachment inquiry in history, that the President finds himself basically dictating the terms of the budget endgame in Congress."

■ University of New Hampshire poll of state residents indicates Texas Gov. **George W. Bush** leading Republican primary field in 2000 with 20 per cent, followed by **Colin Powell** (19 per cent) and **Lamar Alexander** (17 per cent). Vice President **Gore** has big lead over all other Democratic contenders, with 50 per cent. . . . CBS/*New York Times* poll: 62 per cent of New Yorkers say Gov. **George Pataki** should not run for President in 2000. . . . Sen. **Bob Kerrey** (D., Neb.) promises decision on White House bid by end of year.

■ House Minority Whip **David Bonior**, class-warfare veteran, comes under fire in *Detroit News* for claiming $39,000 condo in "lower-middle-class area" of Michigan district as primary residence; Bonior also owns, as D.C. residence, $318,000 home on scenic bluff overlooking Chesapeake Bay, in community which excludes potential homebuyers who have not "achieved recognized status in a professional field." . . . Sen. **Kit Bond** (R., Mo.) says U.S. should consider lifting 22-year-old executive order forbidding government agencies such as CIA to assassinate foreign leaders deemed a threat to national security. . . . *Melrose Place* star **Heather Locklear** subs for **Newt Gingrich**, detained in Washington during budget negotiations, at fundraiser for GOP House candidate **Randy Hoffman**, challenger to first-term Rep. **Brad Sherman** (D., Calif.). . . .



"So much revenue to spend, so little time."

Record number of doctors, other medical professionals run for Congress this year, apparently inspired by growing government involvement in health care. . . . Rep. **Lois Capps** (D., Calif.) and Sen. **Harry Reid** (D., Nev.) led House and Senate, respectively, in financial contributions from top union PACs, reports National Legal and Policy Center. . . . Rep. **Maxine Waters** (D., Calif.) writes to **Fidel Castro** announcing support for Cuba's grant of political asylum to former Black Liberation Army leader **Assata Shakur** (née **Joanne Chesimard**), under extradition.

■ National Fatherhood Initiative reports that 40 per cent of children live in homes without biological father; 40 per cent of absentee fathers haven't seen their kids in more than a year. President **Wade Horn**: "America's children are suffering from a dearth of good fathers." . . . Amnesty International condemns Texas as "conveyor belt of death" for leading nation in executions of convicted criminals. . . . Capital Research Center grades corporations on philanthropic giving. May Department Stores, Freddie Mac, WMX Technologies, and Dayton Hudson receive failing marks for donating heavily to left-wing causes. More than three dollars flow to liberal non-profit groups for every dollar sent rightward, says study. Only Eli Lilly & Co. earns mark of B or higher.

■ Nobel Prize for literature, worth $978,000, awarded to Portuguese Communist Party member **José Saramago**. His 1991 book *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ* was condemned by Catholic Church. Vatican newspaper criticizes "yet another ideologically slanted award." . . . Newly released files show that FBI kept tabs on **Groucho Marx**, but concluded he wasn't member of Communist Party, contrary to 1953 claim by confidential informant. . . . National Journalism Center accepting applications for winter internship program in Washington, D.C. Eight-week program begins Dec. 7; deadline for applications is Nov. 20. Contact: **M. Stanton Evans** or **Mal Kline** at 800 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, D.C.; 202-544-1333; njc@dc.infi.net.

■ Fewer than 3,000 Mexicans living in United States have filed with home country for dual nationality status since law became effective in March. . . . New Zealand raises immigration quota, plans to open recruiting offices in China, Russia, and South Africa. . . . **Imelda Marcos**, wife of former president, acquitted of corruption charges in appeal to Philippine Supreme Court. . . . Royal Artillery, one of British army's most storied regiments, plans to scrap traditional artillery in favor of multi-launch rockets by 2006.

■ Wesleyan University adopts new marketing slogan: "Wesleyan, the Independent Ivy." Objecting students plaster campus with homemade signs: "Reebok, the Independent Nike," "Hydrox, the Independent Oreo," "R.C., the Independent Coke." **NR**

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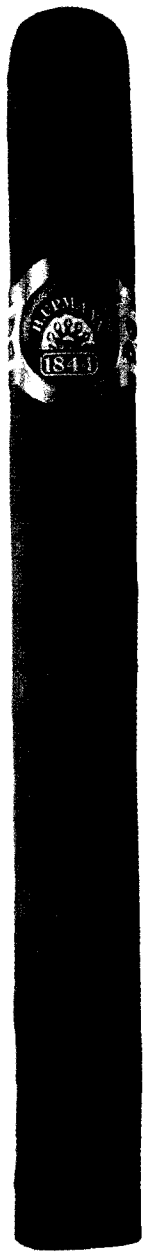

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In the year 2998 A.D., how will we remember our history?

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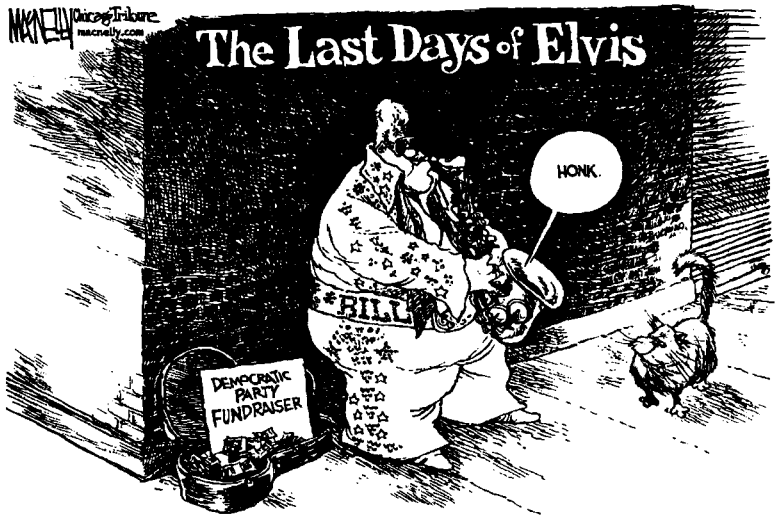
THE WEEK

■ President Clinton made heroic efforts to bring together the parties to an ancient dispute, but Paula Jones's lawyers wouldn't budge.

■ Four years and forty million dollars may yet get Ken Starr impeached. If Democrats have their way, Starr, not the President, will be the center of scrutiny when impeachment hearings open next month. Dennis Shea reviews the charges against Starr in this issue (p. 22). The questions being raised include whether conservative lawyers improperly tipped off Starr about Monica Lewinsky a week earlier than first thought, and whether Starr helped the Paula Jones team before his appointment as independent counsel. As "wrongdoing" goes, this is tame stuff, especially when the accusers are people who laugh off perjury. Since when is it improper for a prosecutor's office to receive a tip (even if it is from lawyers connected to the conservative Federalist Society, which is rapidly becoming the Left's Bilderbergers)? In any case, Starr didn't act on the early tip. As for the "legal advice" he gave Paula Jones's lawyers, it appears to have amounted to an elaboration of his publicly announced position that Presidents are not immune from civil suits; and no money changed hands. Starr, the consummate lawyer, will probably acquit himself ably in any hearings. But his very presence will provide what the Democrats crave most: distraction.



■ The grisly murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay student at the University of Wyoming, has led to demands for the Federal Government to add crimes motivated by hostility toward gays to its list of "hate crimes" and for Wyoming to pass its own "hate-crimes" law. In the future, apparently, all murders will be motivated by affection. Shepard's assailants already face the death penalty; to make their motive, or one of their motives, an additional crime is merely a symbolic gesture. And, perhaps, a sinister one. Plenty of liberals used Shepard's death to blame traditionalist spokesmen for spreading, you guessed it, "hate." Gay activists already refer to speech they dislike as a metaphorical "hate crime." Is it far-fetched to think that "incitement to hate crime" will be the next thing they try to criminalize? Conservatives should resist the equation of orthodox views with hatred—and avoid doing anything that encourages that equation. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, after all, we hate the sin *because* we love the sinner.

■ Fear of an impending recession is causing some liberals to reconsider tax cuts. If that gets us a tax cut next year, well and good. But the cuts we need aren't necessarily the ones they want. They seek to boost consumer spending, and the "targeted, one-time tax cut" called for by the *Washington Post*'s Jim Hoagland would do the trick. The real reason for tax cuts, however, is not to manipulate the current stage of the business cycle. Tax cuts could boost economic growth through the whole cycle and reduce the overall tax burden—*if* they are permanent reductions in rates, not one-time rebates. There's no reason for the Feds to be niggardly, especially in returning ill-gotten gains.

■ Congress has upped the ante in the racial-preference game. Admission quotas having proved insufficient, it has proposed a graduation quota. As first reported in *NR*'s Washington Bulletin (www.nationalreview.com), buried in the $3.5-billion health-education authorization bill is a provision mandating that nursing schools not only admit and retain members of certain racial minorities by quota, but also graduate them by quota. In other words, schools accepting federal funds under this authorization would have to lower standards when they admit certain students, hold them low throughout their schooling, and keep them low upon exit. No word yet from the nurses' prospective patients.

■ Not all the pork is in the budget. The Internet Tax Freedom Act included: $3 million to establish a "Mark O. Hatfield Fellows program" at Portland State University; $3 million for the "Paul Simon Public Policy Institute" at Southern Illinois University; $10 million for an endowment fund for the "Howard Baker School of Government" at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville; $6 million for the "John Glenn

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Institute for Public Service and Public Policy" at Ohio State University at Columbus. So this is what a majority's for: Republican warhorses get $4 million more of the loot.

■ Sen. Russ Feingold (D., Wis.), last seen in the company of John McCain (R., Ariz.) agitating for unconstitutional campaign restrictions, is now seeking to become the Senator from Common Cause. He has imposed a $3.8-million spending limit on himself and is discouraging independent expenditures on his behalf. His opponent, Rep. Mark Neumann, has adopted an identical spending limit, but has not been foolhardy enough to forswear independent expenditures. It is this supposed outrage that Feingold is making the centerpiece of his campaign. Just imagine: the state Republican Party is running ads critical of an incumbent Democratic senator, in an election year! Some of the spots even criticize his record on taxes! Senator, meet the First Amendment.

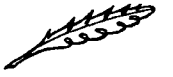
■ Violet Amirault, her son Gerald, and her daughter Cheryl were imprisoned, bankrupted, and ruined when the child sex-abuse hysteria of the Eighties hit Massachusetts. There was never any physical evidence that the children at the Fells Acres Day School had suffered harm. But prosecutors insisted that the children who went happily to and from school were enduring torture and death threats there; that Violet Amirault had suddenly become a pedophile at 61; and that Gerald Amirault had raped a 4-year-old with a butcher knife without leaving any marks. Children were asked leading questions until they agreed. The two women spent eight years in prison; Violet was posthumously acquitted this year, and Cheryl has won a new trial. But Gerald still languishes in prison. Scott Harshbarger, the district attorney whose office prosecuted the Amiraults, ran for re-election on that prosecution and charges those who raise questions with prolonging the suffering of victimized families. He is now the attorney general and the Democratic candidate for governor. The incumbent, moderate Republican Paul Cellucci, supports "abortion rights," which suggests a defective view of public morality. But what Harshbarger has done ranks among the worst abuses of state power. It disqualifies him from higher office.

■ If the arrest of Chilean ex-strongman Augusto Pinochet is allowed to stand, it will be much less likely that any dictator will ever again relinquish power voluntarily. Pinochet was in London for back surgery when British police descended. Two leftist Spanish judges, purportedly investigating crimes against Spaniards committed by the Chilean and Argentine juntas in the Seventies and Eighties, had requested extradition. The U.S. clucks approvingly. The government of Chile, which gave Pinochet amnesty and made him senator for life as part of the reconciliation accord under which he gave up power a decade ago, has protested. The double standard is bad enough: no one bothers Fidel Castro on his travels abroad. Worse is the precedent, since such accords have made many democratic transitions possible, from the Philippines to South Africa. The pattern of harassment of many such figures after they have stepped down—from the Shah of Iran to Ferdinand Marcos and now Pinochet—will lead others to cling to power to the bitter end. This stunt will be paid for in blood.

The No-Show

Mr. Clinton flew to Gotham
With a leg-up for Chuck Schumer,
Still slap-happy from D'Amato;
But (and this is just a rumor),
Chuck skipped town because Lewinsky's
Quotes read like a night at Minsky's.

—W. H. von Dreele



■ American mediators expected it would take only a few months to negotiate another incremental Israeli redeployment from the West Bank. Instead, it has taken almost two years. The sticking point has been, as usual, Yasir Arafat's unwillingness to commit his organization to stamping out terrorism. Despite President Clinton's efforts to broker a deal, this fundamental issue will almost certainly remain. Nor is Arafat likely to relinquish his threat to declare a Palestinian state unilaterally next May 4, when the five-year negotiating period of the Oslo accords formally runs out. That will be the next crisis—not that you could tell this from the Administration's weak efforts so far to prevent it. Or is reeling from crisis to crisis the Clinton Doctrine?

■ NATO air strikes in Kosovo were averted by a last-minute deal brokered by U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke. Like previous deals dictated by the Clinton Administration's reluctance to use force—as in North Korea in 1994 and Iraq this past February—it is inevitably a compromise, and one in which a wily adversary is likely to run rings around us. Serb strongman Slobodan Milosevic is to withdraw some, but not all, of his troops from Kosovo and to permit elections next year. The 90 per cent of the province's population that is ethnically Albanian will supposedly be protected from Serbian intimidation by two thousand unarmed monitors under the aegis of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Unarmed NATO reconnaissance aircraft will aid in the monitoring and also discourage infiltration from Albania. The ceasefire at least lets the fifty thousand refugees go home for the harsh winter. But with NATO's attention likely to wane, Milosevic has no reason to tremble in his jackboots.

■ In his 13th encyclical to date, *Fides et Ratio*, Pope John Paul II argues that faith and reason are symbiotic. Obviously reflecting on the totalitarian experiments of this century, he declares that without the light of faith, reason can turn in on itself. One result of this turn is the "postmodern" insistence

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that reason is arbitrary, there being no Truth for it to uncover. Against this nihilism the Pope invites us to reason in faith and have faith in reason. Thus he upholds the possibility of human solidarity, for we all need to ask, and have answered, the big questions: Who are we? Why do we exist? The Pope calls for allowing faith to be a guiding light, for recognizing the mysterious purpose of human reason: to draw minds together in the common pursuit of God. As Pope John Paul II has said so many times during the twenty years of his papacy, "Be not afraid."

■ America's first Catholic college, Georgetown University, may be a safe haven for the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual student group, but don't try to run a conservative newspaper there. The *Georgetown Academy*'s October issue features a cover story on the university's efforts to get students and faculty to seek tolerance counseling and to adorn their doors with a pink triangle; the paper also has an editorial calling for the resignation of the university president, the Reverend Leo O'Donovan, SJ, for, among other things, his continuing public support of alumnus Bill Clinton. Within hours after this issue of the *Academy* had been distributed, copies had all but disappeared from campus. Another victory for tolerance.

■ The lesson of *Ellen* was that a sitcom can't be all gay pride all the time, at least for now. But pair a gay man with a straight woman as the protagonists in a sexless romance, and those trouble-making Christians might stay quiet. Hence the string of sitcoms and movies featuring just that combination of lead characters: most recently the hip NBC sitcom *Will & Grace*. Recent films with exactly the same premise include *My Best Friend's Wedding*, *As Good as It Gets*, *The Opposite of Sex*, and *The Object of My Affection*. Others are in the works. As *Entertainment Weekly* puts it regarding *Will & Grace*: "On the one hand, there's enough gayness to grab some hipster cred and lots of Oscar Wilde-ish repartee. On the other, the straight gal keeps the scripts from drifting into Joe Sixpack-alienating *Ellen* territory." Hollywood may yet make prophets out of the editors of the *Village Voice*, whose front page earlier this year boasted, "It's a gay world. Straight people just live in it."

■ Yes, 1998 was a great year for baseball, but is the national pastime going soft? Take the Yankees–Indians playoff series, when New York second baseman Chuck Knoblauch lost game two by stopping to argue an umpire's call rather than scrambling for a still-in-play ball. What made the incident oh-so-Nineties was the post-muff analysis by sports psychologists. Yes, they exist. The *New York Post* contacted a bunch, who concluded that Knoblauch "may have been paralyzed by a traumatic childhood flashback." New York papers printed a picture of Knoblauch hugging the Yankees' team shrink. Where are your sharpened spikes, Ty Cobb? What about the Gas House Gang? It's enough to make you want to . . . follow soccer.

■ On NPR's "Car Talk," hosts Click and Clack report that, owing to Senator Glenn's advanced age, several adjustments have been made to the space shuttle and its mission: 1) The top speed of the shuttle will be 25 mph. 2) The right-turn signal will be left on for the duration of the flight. 3) All instruments can now be activated by "the clapper."

HOUSEKEEPING NOTES: *NR*'s redesign is upon us. Among other changes: "From the Editor" has been dropped, freeing the editor to contribute articles more regularly, and Kate O'Beirne's column has been folded into the articles section. You will inevitably notice adjustments in coming weeks as we settle into our new suit of clothes. Thanks to Austin Metze for doing the original design work and to our art director, Luba Kolomytseva, who has the patience of a saint, for making it all work.

CORRECTION: Jonah Goldberg's article last issue, "Regrettable Van Susteren," misstated the name of the Menendez lawyer. It was Leslie Abramson and she represented only Erik Menendez.

LOSING THE REVOLUTION

Budget Bimbos

THE writing has been on the wall for more than a year. It was clear from the big-spending budget deal of 1997 that Republicans had thrown in the towel on limited government for this Congress. The spending caps of which they boasted, we predicted, would soon be busted. And so it has come to pass.

It took Monica Lewinsky, however, to make the policy rout complete. Republican leaders, counting on conservatives' anger toward President Clinton to bring them to the polls, cynically decided that they did not need to advance their agenda. All year, as the projected surpluses grew, they reduced the size of their tax-cut proposals. Eventually the House approved $80 billion and the Senate proposed $30 billion. Then Clinton convinced the GOP to abandon even these—although, according to Citizens for a Sound Economy, taxes could have been cut by $1.5 trillion over the next ten years without affecting Social Security payouts. Middle-class families continue to labor under the highest peacetime tax burden in American history.

The $1.7-trillion Federal Government will continue to grow at a rate well above the inflation rate. In Fiscal Year 1999, according to a calculation by *NR*'s Stephen Moore, Washington will spend as much, adjusted for inflation, as it did during the whole time between 1787 and 1920. Since it came to power in 1995, the Republican Congress has allowed spending to increase at a rate only slightly lower than it did during the last four years of Democratic control.

The budget includes everything from $250,000 for chewing-gum research to $200 million for subsidies to dairy farmers, who are, incidentally, benefiting from high milk prices this year. This latter figure is part of a $6-billion agricultural handout, including "disaster relief" that will aid even farmers who refused to buy crop insurance and signed waivers saying they would not accept federal support. The International Monetary Fund will get $18

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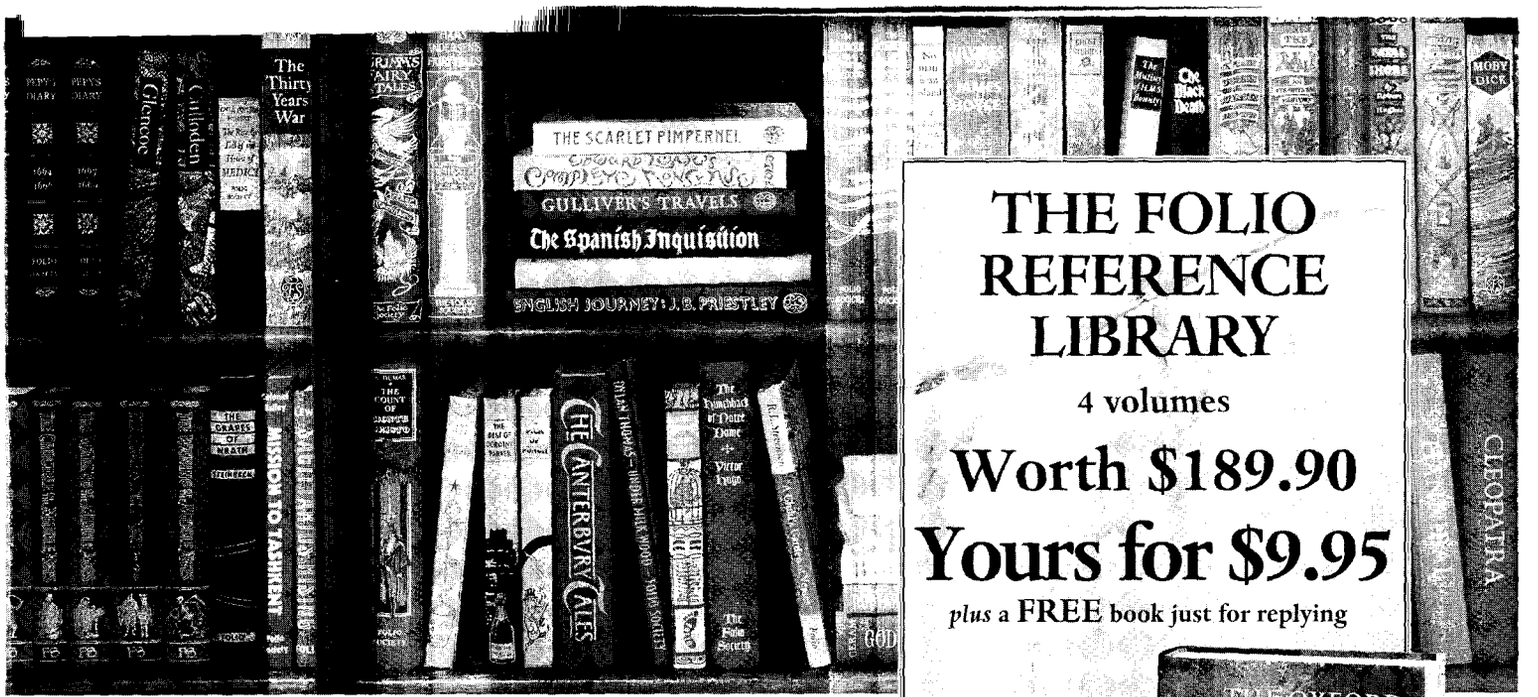

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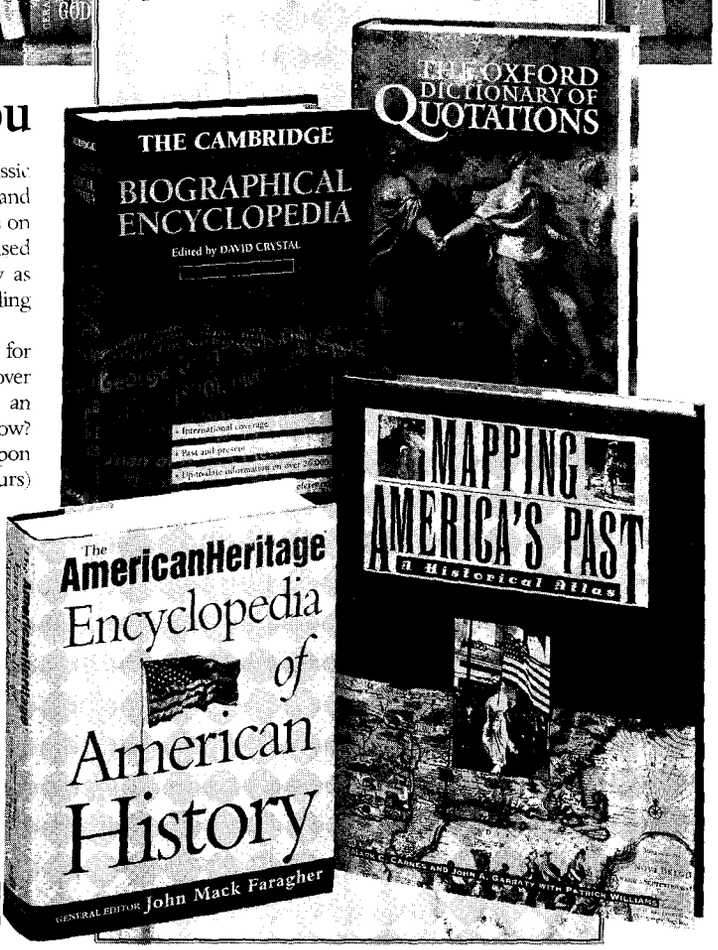
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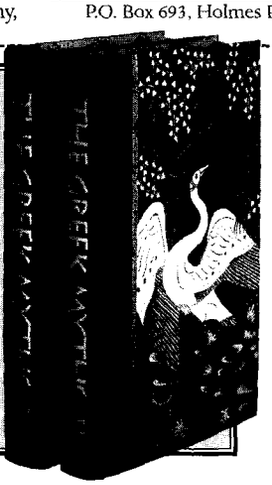

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■ LOOKING AHEAD ■

Compromising Positions

OCTOBER 21, 2002 (AP)—The House and Senate today approved the first-ever $2-trillion federal budget—an 8 per cent funding increase over last year. Senate Majority Leader George Voinovich (R., Ohio) heralded the budget as evidence that "Republicans can be conservative and pro-government at the same time." An equally jubilant Senate Minority Leader Paul Wellstone (D., Minn.) said, "I am delighted that we got virtually everything we asked for from the Republicans." President Colin Powell says he will sign the budget into law tomorrow.

The new budget expands Medicare to all Americans over the age of 50 and below the age of 21. Medicaid will now cover sex-change operations, partial-birth abortions, and assisted suicide. The Senate also agreed to appropriate an extra $6.5 billion to fight global climate change—money that had been held up by Republicans for two years. Earth First! president Al Gore applauded the funding decision, noting, "Only people who believe that the earth is flat still deny global cooling."

The Republicans also agreed to provide International Monetary Fund assistance to shore up the ailing Iraqi and Libyan economies—without the conditions on which they had previously insisted, such as pledges from Saddam Hussein and Muammar el-Qaddafi not to build chemical weapons with the funds. "If a neighbor's house is on fire, you lend him a hose," said Federal Reserve Board Chairman George Soros.

The $120-billion Education Department allotment, a 40 per cent increase, will reduce class sizes to eight students per teacher and will ensure that every school in America is equipped with state-of-the-art metal detectors and an Olympic-sized swimming pool. "This year we were determined to match the Democrats dollar for dollar on education funding," said Education Secretary Christine Todd Whitman.

Republicans boasted that they had won important concessions on labor issues. The minimum wage will be raised to $11 an hour, as Senator Edward M. Kennedy had proposed, but Republicans were able to blunt the impact by mandating a $9-an-hour "training wage." Workers who have to take a child to a soccer match, Cub Scout meeting, or piano recital, or take a pet to the veterinarian, will get paid family leave. But firms will not have to provide paid leave to employees to take their car to the service station for an oil change, as Democrats had sought.

A new federal Department of Children and Family Services will fund child care, condom-distribution grants to the states, parenting classes, and family-conflict-resolution centers. This $20-billion initiative was co-sponsored by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R., Utah) and freshman Sen. Hillary Rodham (D., Calif.). Social-conservative activist Gary Bauer, barely able to contain his anger, announced that he has finally decided to form a third party.

The new federal agency will be funded through the fines imposed on the producers of sugar-coated breakfast cereals. In addition to paying a $100-billion liability settlement, Kellogg's agreed to stop using Tony the Tiger to promote Frosted Flakes. "For years the cereal producers knew their product was dangerous and addictive, yet they suppressed the evidence," said HHS Secretary John McCain. "But what has been most sinister about this industry," he added, "is that it has marketed its sugar-coated cereals to young children." Tennessee Rep. Al Gore Jr. won the hearts of many of his House colleagues with his impassioned plea on the House floor for the civil penalties, noting with moist eyes that his own wife's brother-in-law, a diabetic, nearly died from an overdose of Lucky Charms.

The budget deadlock that paralyzed Capitol Hill throughout the spring and summer was suddenly broken when Vice President Dole suggested that her husband, Bob Dole, the 84-year-old former senator and 1996 Republican presidential nominee, broker a bipartisan deal. Democrats immediately and unconditionally accepted the offer of Mr. Dole as a mediator. When the spending agreement was announced, Dole said that "sometimes in this town you have to rise above petty partisanship, step up to the plate, and just govern."

Nonpartisan analysts applauded the achievements. "This was one of the most productive Congresses is a generation," said CNN and American Enterprise Institute political analyst William Schneider.

Only the hard-to-please right wing of the Republican Party seemed disheartened by the budget agreement. "We negotiated like Robert E. Lee at Appomattox," complained Sen. Roger Staubach (R., Tex.). "Surely, with 63 senators and 269 House members, Republicans should be cutting taxes and downsizing government, not approving the biggest budget increase in twenty years."

But retiring Speaker Newt Gingrich dismissed such complaints. "We can't change the direction of government overnight," he said. "We simply don't have the necessary two-thirds veto-proof majorities in Congress to control the policy agenda." Conservative critics responded that since Republicans control the White House as well as Congress, a veto-proof majority is unnecessary.

"The right-wingers seem to forget that we still don't control the Supreme Court or the Federal Reserve Board," said Treasury Secretary Richard Darman, who helped Mr. Dole arbitrate the agreement. The real lesson of this year's budget negotiations, according to an RNC press release, is that "if Americans want smaller government and less oppressive taxes, they just have to elect more Republicans in November."

—Stephen Moore

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60	$ 660	$ 865	$ 885	$ 1,130	$ 1,365	*n/a*	*n/a*
65	$1,138	$1,463	$1,518	$ 1,845	$ 2,923	*n/a*	*n/a*
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billion and, in a concession to the GOP, undergo reforms of limited usefulness (see Alan Reynolds, "Imperial Rule," p. 45). Another $1 billion in new education spending is earmarked for hiring teachers, continuing the destructive focus on inputs rather than outcomes that has characterized our national education policy for a generation.

Spending may be irresistible in a time of plenty, but Republicans also gave ground on other issues. Roughly three hundred health-insurance plans for federal employees will now be required to cover five types of prescription contraceptives, including some that act as abortifacients. When Sen. Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) lost a vote earlier this year attempting to eliminate the Department of Transportation's minority set-aside programs, he inserted an amendment offering fast-track Supreme Court review if they came under legal scrutiny. The Clinton Administration fought this modest provision furiously, knowing full well that it is essentially ignoring the Court's 1995 *Adarand* decision. So the GOP let it vanish during negotiations; two years after California passed Proposition 209, Congress has still done nothing to chip away at racial preferences.

On Census sampling, the Democrats won another victory. Republicans never expected to enact a ban on the practice this year, but they wanted to structure the Commerce Department's funding in such a way as to force a showdown with the White House next March, perhaps in the immediate wake of an expected Supreme Court ruling. Instead, GOP leaders have let Democrats keep the Census Bureau's money rolled into a massive appropriation for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, and to provide funding until next June—when the White House can threaten a shutdown including popular and important government functions such as providing passports, and the GOP can fold yet again.

Republicans managed to extract a few concessions from the Democrats. They maintained a ban on national testing standards, although, in self-defense, they funded efforts to develop them. They also prohibited needle-exchange programs for heroin addicts, which, whatever the policy merits, was not much of a political achievement. They also won a one-year ban on an effort to federalize drivers' licenses—a stealth national ID card.

GOP leaders have crowed about other aspects of the deal, but here the benefits are much more illusory. More than one-third of the $10-billion increase in "defense" spending does not actually go to the military. It includes funds for anti-terrorism initiatives such as embassy security and more than $100 million for a new visitor center at the Capitol Building. These may be needed; to call them "defense" spending, however, shows a Clinton-like disregard for the truth. In the meantime, the budget will do little to help the military increase its readiness for war.

All in all, this budget is an appropriate conclusion to a Republican Congress that has lacked the imagination even to conceive of a politics both principled and smart. It also permits a verdict on Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R., Miss.), who led the retreat. Elected amid high conservative hopes, he has turned out to be a visionless Beltway fixer: Bob Dole with a drawl and a taste for pork.

In fairness, Republicans have inherited a budget-making process designed to increase spending and keep taxes high; but so much the worse that they did not change it. And they were understandably wary of another battle over a federal shutdown with President Clinton. But none of this justifies the giddy yet defensive proclamations of budget victory now emanating from the Republican spin machine. This is the response of people who know they have reason to feel guilty.

Republicans' achievements during this Congress have been almost entirely negative: beating back tobacco taxes, minimum-wage hikes, campaign-finance restrictions. The agenda for next year is a mystery; impeachment is practically all that is left to backtrack on.

Republican leaders have become adept at rationalizing cowardice as deft politics. But their inertia does not merely upset their conservative constituency; it leaves the broader public with no reason to favor them. Scandal may see them through this election, but parties rarely drift into a strong national majority. They are left saying that things would have been worse if the Democrats ran Congress, which is probably true. But it's a distressingly close call.

Two Gals in Trouble

Senator Boxer and Senator Braun
Look like a party that lasted till dawn:
Both have been running like Alice, as each
Pales at the polls and suppresses a screech.
One may assume they'll have at us like Huns,
Stanching mascara as eye-liner runs.

—W. H. von Dreele

THE CULTURE

Class Notes

YOUR local art-film theater is likely to be culturally . . . interesting, not least because of the people who frequent it. Patronizing a place like that can be a way to revel in one's class affiliation: urban upper middle, New Class. So for Manhattanites, visiting Lincoln Plaza Theater is a quick way to take the pulse of the smart set.

More than a century after Baudelaire, this crowd is still tickled by the idea of shocking the middle class. So maybe it's not surprising that of the five movies now showing at Lincoln Plaza, three concern sex between adults and children: *Lolita*, *The Celebration*, and *Happiness*. The hottest ticket is *Happiness*, which has won adulation for director Todd Solondz well beyond the usual domain of the art film. Photographs of Solondz, invariably showing the 39-year-old New Yorker with nerd-chic black-framed glasses and a disgruntled look on his puss, have been

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omnipresent in the feature sections of our newspapers. The *New York Times* calls him "one of the most lacerating, funny, and distinctive voices in American film."

"Funny"? A publicity-generating controversy has sprung up around the question of how Mr. Solondz views the pederasty of his protagonist, a suburban New Jersey psychiatrist who rapes his son's adolescent chums. Evidently we're meant to take seriously the character's declaration that he "can't help" what he does. Then there are the film's depictions of a certain solitary sex act, in keeping with the season inaugurated by Monica Lewinsky's dress and seconded by the hair-gel scene in *There's Something about Mary*. (That's one in the eye for conservatives who think the rate of cultural decay has slowed down.) But what's really notable about *Happiness* has to do not with sex but with class, and cruelty.

Happiness is about sadness, pitched as humor. Its characters suffer from loneliness, homeliness, shyness, obesity—not some generic versions of these qualities but the versions associated by the New Class with Middle America. Their clothing, speech, attitudes, homes, favorite pop songs ("Mandy," "You Light Up My Life") have been calibrated to serve as class signifiers. Thus a pathetic fat character played by Jon Lovitz breaks down crying in a cheesy restaurant when his homely girlfriend breaks up with him. At Lincoln Plaza, the hoots of laughter at such scenes signify the delight of those to the manor born in watching serfs trip each other in the mud, almost as sickening as a fictional act of pederasty. Todd Solondz has issued an invitation to the cultural swells to enjoy the misery of people they regard as inferiors. The film for which he is being celebrated may accurately be called wicked.

NOTES & ASIDES

Godfrey Schmidt, R I P

AS with our other close friend and counselor, C. Dickerman Williams, who died recently at 97 (see "The Week," Sept. 14) it was a very long life for Godfrey Schmidt, who died at age 95 on September 27. He was a lively presence in the early years of this magazine, giving us his time and showering us with his talent, serving in many capacities including as a director of the corporation.

Godfrey Schmidt touched down professionally in myriad assignments. He was, above all, an industrious lawyer and a devoted father. With his late wife, Grace, he had six children. One of them, Agatha Schmidt Dowd, for ten years illuminated our offices as principal researcher, both for the magazine and for *Firing Line*, and as general enthusiast for our cause. We lost her to a predatory bachelor, with whom 27 years ago she went off to live happily ever after. She bore four sons, and is prepared now to manage the political career of her husband, John Dowd, if he wins his race in New Hampshire this November for state senator.

Aggie inherited the vivacity and industry of her father. Godfrey Schmidt was a law partner of the late Sen. Thomas Dodd. A graduate of Fordham (the college and the law school), he taught jurisprudence and constitutional law at his alma mater for many years, served later as deputy industrial commissioner of New York, as a member of the Atomic Energy Commission, and

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as counsel for the plaintiffs in critical litigation involving James Hoffa, Francis Cardinal Spellman, the Orchestra Leaders of America, and the American Manufacturers Association. He was the very first candidate of the Conservative Party for governor of New York State.

The editors of NATIONAL REVIEW extend their condolences to the family of our old friend and counselor, and affirm the judgment of his friend Jacques Maritain, who wrote of Godfrey Schmidt's "radiant generosity, both of the intellect and of the heart." —WFB

J. P. McFadden, R I P

JUST after four o'clock in the morning, Faith McFadden heard her husband leave the bedroom and open the creaky door to the kitchen. Her eyes were closing again when she heard the thud. She got up and went into the kitchen. He was lying on the floor, his face and neck bloodied. She dialed 911 and in moments "they were all there"—ambulance, firemen, paramedics. Jim McFadden was dead. The cause, an esophageal hemorrhage. On hearing the news, some of us were grateful to Providence.

Just the day before, he had come to work at the offices of the *Human Life Review*, the scholarly quarterly he had founded almost 25 years ago to make the case for the unborn. He seemed as well as he ever was in those last years, but his system was racked with disorders. Late in August he wrote to me (we did not speak—he had lost his voice five years earlier and could communicate only by writing on a pad or a keyboard), "Maybe I'm losing my nerve," he said in setting down his plans for the future of his publication, "but I fear I'd better not delay this any longer. My lungs are so pocketed that infection is likely, if not certain; I fear the hospital far more than death. I hate it with all the passion I have left." And then, a few weeks later, the day after his 68th birthday, he gave thanks for the case of wine, even though he could do no more than put a drop of it on what used to be his tongue, having lost his capacity to eat or drink in the normal way. "Today," he reminisced, "is the 42nd anniversary of my arrival at 211 East 37th [where NATIONAL REVIEW dwelt for its first two years]. I'm probably using the same Royal I was given that day. Nothing terribly new on my front—more damned tests tomorrow, that might explain my back pain." Then a line about the mess in Washington. "Oh well, cheers anyway."

He had read about the founding of NATIONAL REVIEW while still in Germany, where he served in military intelligence after two years as a reporter for the *Youngstown Vindicator* following his graduation from Youngstown College. He was 24, middle-sized, brown-eyed, always with his horn-rimmed glasses and his pipe. He punctuated his conversation about the Soviet enterprise and creeping European socialism with cackles of laughter, which is what we all most missed when he lost his voice. Everything had its funny side, though he was never the dilettante: He was deadly serious, about his beliefs, about his family and his friends, his country and his faith.

We gave him a probationary job as assistant in the circulation department. A few years later he was Associate Publisher. Thirty years later he detached from NATIONAL REVIEW, while continuing to serve as a director of the corporation and as a consultant on every NATIONAL REVIEW enterprise. He was chairman of the National Committee of Catholic Laymen, writer and editor of the fortnightly newsletter, *catholic eye*, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, and president of the Human Life Foundation.

Jim married Faith Abbott and they had five children. For the McFaddens it was, for several decades, the success story of a happily committed, deeply devout Christian family, the paterfamilias busily engaged in running what we jocularly called his "empire," his wife and eldest daughter working on his editorial enterprises, the other children proceeding through college, while tens of thousands of Americans heavily depended on the material he assembled, edited, and sent out, featuring such writers as Malcolm Muggeridge, Clare Boothe Luce, and John Noonan.

"In April 1993," he began a brief recounting of his medical history at the request of a friend, "I noticed a lump on my neck but, having a sinus infection at the time, I assumed it was just a gland. In early May the fever was gone, the lump wasn't—it was larger." The surgery removed McFadden's cancer, but also his ability to speak. Eighteen months later his oldest son Robert, married less than two years, died of cancer. In June of this year, McFadden suffered protracted ill treatment at a New York hospital. He lost patience and prepared a detailed complaint, intending a copy for John Cardinal O'Connor, an outspoken admirer. He hesitated before sending off his gruesome account. "My greatest regret," he wrote, "is that all these things that have happened to me have, in addition, happened to my wife, Faith. I believe that God loves her beyond my love, I must leave it at that. In fact, I was determined to write all this when I left [the hospital] on Saturday; then, after Sunday's gospel, I began losing my nerve. My habit is to read the Psalms in the wee hours; early Sunday I happened on Psalm 119, which begins, 'In my trouble I cried to the Lord, and He heard me. O Lord, deliver my soul from wicked lips, and a deceitful tongue.'" But he did send out his account of his mistreatment. The Cardinal replied with concern and the promise to look into the case, and closed his letter, "There is not a day you are not in my Masses and other prayers. I know it is easy for me to say, but I do plead that you unite your sense of helplessness with that of Christ on the Cross. The power this gives you is beyond measure."

FOR so many years, Jim McFadden animated the editorial and business offices of NATIONAL REVIEW. He was the prime exhibit of G. K. Chesterton's dogged insistence that piety and laughter are inseparable, and indefeasibly the work of God; the same God who admits pain but who promises, too, the everlasting joy which all who knew him know that Jim McFadden now knows; resting in peace and in the devoted memory of his family and his friends. —WFB

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■ THE SCANDAL I ■

Abusive Power

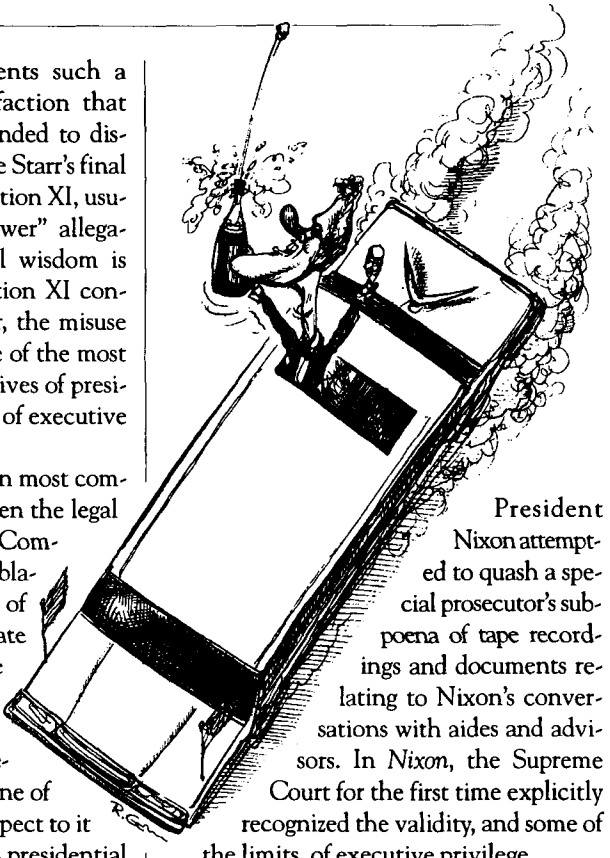
A bogus claim of privilege is grounds for impeachment.

WILLIAM C. PORTH & ROBERT P. GEORGE

THE Starr referral presents such a treasure trove of malefaction that conventional wisdom has tended to discount the importance of Judge Starr's final ground for impeachment, Section XI, usually styled the "abuse of power" allegations. But the conventional wisdom is wrong. The grab bag of Section XI contains a gem of the first water, the misuse for personal advantage of one of the most serious and sensitive prerogatives of presidential office: the invocation of executive privilege.

This abuse is far graver than most commentators, and apparently even the legal staff of the House Judiciary Committee, appreciate. It is the blatant usurpation of a power of public office to serve a private end. Beyond that, it gives the lie to the claims of the White House and its allies that the Lewinsky affair is a purely private matter, and that none of Bill Clinton's actions with respect to it reflect on the discharge of his presidential duties or on his fitness for office. Lying under oath, witness tampering, and all the rest are formidable offenses, but they are offenses that any anti-social citizen could commit. They do not require as a predicate any use of presidential power and they do not necessarily directly impede the performance of any presidential function. But the abusive invocation of executive privilege is itself a misuse of presidential power and therefore a ground for impeachment beyond any plausible dispute.

The key legal principles governing executive privilege are set forth in *United States* v. *Nixon*, the 1974 case in which President Nixon attempted to quash a special prosecutor's subpoena of tape recordings and documents relating to Nixon's conversations with aides and advisors. In *Nixon*, the Supreme Court for the first time explicitly recognized the validity, and some of the limits, of executive privilege.



The essence of the *Nixon* opinion is that "Absent a claim of need to protect military, diplomatic, or sensitive national-security secrets," not even the "very important interest in confidentiality of presidential communications" can prevail over the need for information required for the fair administration of the criminal-justice system. *Nixon* also makes it clear that the implicit constitutional basis for executive privilege is limited to instances in which the need for confidentiality "relates to the effective discharge of a President's powers." Thus, *Nixon* demonstrates the utter vacuity of President Clinton's assertion of executive privilege.

The Office of the Independent Counsel's investigation was focused, in the winter and spring of 1998, on matters related to the President's dealings with Monica Lewinsky. Whether or not these dealings were as purely private as the President contends, they plainly had nothing whatever to do with carrying out the functions and discharging the duties of the Presidency. Mr. Clinton, therefore, cannot have had any good-faith belief that executive privilege, even in its most expansive interpretation, might cover such activities as arranging, consummating, and concealing his sexual encounters.

In this regard, although both Nixon and Clinton sought to abuse executive privilege, Nixon could have offered two defenses or extenuations that are foreclosed to Clinton. First, Nixon could have claimed that the law on executive privilege, at the time he invoked it, was not clear or settled. By the time Clinton acted, however, the *Nixon* opinion had been in the law reports for over twenty years.

Second, Nixon could legitimately have pointed out that the broad subpoena he was resisting required disclosure of much discussion and documentation of proper presidential business in addition to deliberations over Watergate. The subpoenas challenged by Clinton, however, were not for tapes or documents, but for the testimony of various White House officials—Bruce Lindsey, Cheryl Mills, Nancy Hernreich, Sidney Blumenthal, and Lanny Breuer. Instead of making a blanket assertion of executive privilege, a President minimally respectful of the law could have allowed them to testify, revealing whatever they knew in response to questions about Monica Lewinsky but vigilant to assert the President's invocation of executive privilege if the questioning ever turned to sensitive matters of diplomacy or defense or, indeed, to any properly confidential matter involving actual presidential responsibilities.

The obvious bad faith with which President Clinton asserted executive privilege is confirmed by his absurd efforts to dissociate himself from the assertion. Only the President himself can assert or authorize the assertion of executive privilege. That Mr. Clinton did precisely that was confirmed on March 17, as the Starr referral notes, when White House Counsel Charles F. C. Ruff informed the court before which the issue was pending that he had "discussed" the matter with the President, who had directed the assertion

Mr. Porth is a partner with the law firm of Robinson and McElwee. Mr. George is a professor at Princeton University.

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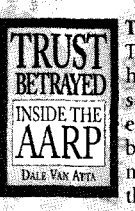

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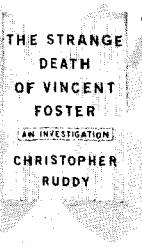

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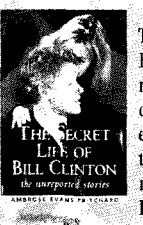

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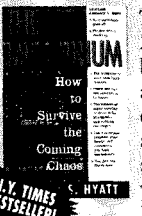

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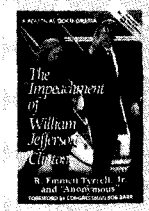

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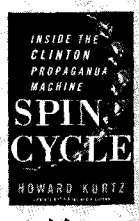

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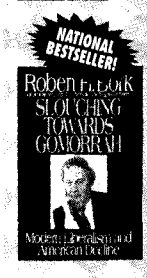

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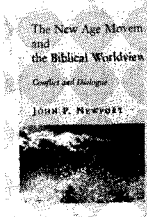

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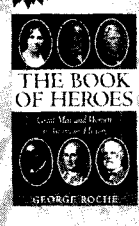

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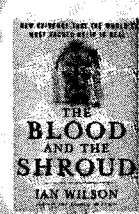

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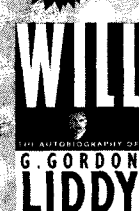

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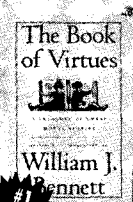

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of Executive Privilege. But, as the Starr referral also points out, just a week later Clinton deflected reporters' questions about the invocation of executive privilege by pretending that it was an independent action by his lawyers about which he knew nothing: "You should ask someone

■

Here the President's 'privacy' defense backfires on him.

■

who knows. . . . I haven't discussed that with the lawyers. I don't know."

Clinton must either have hoped against hope that he might prevail on executive privilege or, more likely, have known that he couldn't possibly prevail and therefore interposed the assertion for the sole purpose of obstruction and delay. It scarcely matters which, since either reason reflects bad faith. If he thought he might prevail, he showed himself content to use an illegitimate veil of confidentiality to hide indefinitely information that was wholly unrelated to his executive duties. If, on the other hand, he sought only delay, his assertion was a patent obstruction of justice.

But why should the abuse of executive privilege be regarded as an especially serious matter? For one thing, concealment of the deliberations and actions of any government official—especially the President of the United States—must be kept to the strictest limits because it is an affront to the principle of open government. Our people cannot meaningfully participate in self-government if they have no way of discovering what their government is doing and why. Therefore, only a compelling *public* interest in the preservation of confidentiality can trump the public's right to monitor the operations of government.

Furthermore, the perversion to personal ends of any power that is entrusted to the Executive to be exercised for the public good is the classic definition of tyranny. The importance of this principle is unaffected by the particular power being abused or the specific personal end being served, although the immediacy of the danger posed by the abuse and the intensity of the outcry against it can vary with circumstances. One tyrant might use the army he commands to silence his enemies. Another might use his foreknowledge of government economic regulation to make a killing in the stock market. A third might use a power to prevent inquiry into his actions so as to misbehave as he pleases and yet escape punishment and even embarrassment.

Such abuses could vary in the gravity of their practical consequences to individuals, but the offenses against the commonweal are identical. In each case, a power that is entrusted to the Executive for use in the public interest is twisted to serve his own private advantage. Such unfaithfulness to office violates the fundamental trust that was a prerequisite for the granting of authority in the first place.

And here President Clinton's "privacy" defense backfires on him. Perhaps, as his defenders claim, he could only have been expected to do everything in his power, from lying to stonewalling, to keep a properly private matter private. But that argument is logically incompatible with the exercise of any *public* power for that purpose. Once you have taken recourse to such public power you cannot continue to claim that the matter is purely private: you yourself have transformed it. The abuse of a power of office is a *public* wrong, regardless of the fact that the motivation for the abuse may have been to gratify a private desire or cover up a private misdeed, even one as tawdry as Bill Clinton's fling with Monica Lewinsky. **NR**

■ THE SCANDAL II ■

Shooting Starr

Critics try to make Starr the issue.

DENNIS SHEA

JOSEPH Conrad once observed that "words, as is well known, are the great foes of reality." So it should come as no surprise, on the eve of only the third presidential impeachment proceeding in our nation's history, that the Clinton defense team of Carville, Dershowitz, Conyers & Frank is out in force, battling reality with great ferocity. The goal: To put Kenneth Starr, not Bill Clinton, in the dock of public judgment.

It shouldn't work. If Starr is called as a witness before the House Judiciary Committee, he will have to face at least three lines of attack now being road-tested by Clinton's cable-TV apologists. He should have no difficulty beating all of them back.

The "Leaky Faucet" Argument. More than four months have passed since the publication of the maiden issue of *Content* magazine, in which publisher Steven Brill accused Starr of leaking secret grand-jury information in violation of Rule 6(e) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. Despite Starr's denials of any improper conduct and the torrent of criticism directed at the Brill article, the leak allegations have been the subject of three separate investigations.

And guess what? We have yet to see Starr's office tied to a single leak that violates Rule 6(e).

But let's suppose that Starr or one of his deputies *did* step over the 6(e) line. What then? The offending prosecutor could be subject to disbarment, perhaps even criminal prosecution. But it's hard to see how a prosecutorial leak excuses President Clinton for repeatedly lying under oath and obstructing justice.

The "Perjury Trap" Argument. The phrase "perjury trap" appears nowhere in the entire federal criminal code. There is no "perjury trap" defense against charges of perjury—or any other crime, for that matter. But flip on CNBC's *Rivera Live* and you would get the impression that President Clinton was somehow forced, "trapped," into his role as a serial oath-breaker.

The theory is that Ken Starr, Linda Tripp, and the Paula Jones legal team were all acting in concert. Mrs. Tripp tipped off Starr, Starr egged her on to egg on Monica Lewinsky, and Starr and Mrs. Tripp each illicitly cooperated with the Jones lawyers to bag their presidential prey. Makes the blood boil, doesn't it? But it happens to be untrue. It took me ten minutes to find this out in a telephone interview with Charles

Mr. Shea is an attorney based in Washington, D.C., and a columnist for MSNBC.com.

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Bakaly, Starr's counselor and press spokesman.

Bakaly denies that Starr or anyone in his office instructed Linda Tripp to contact the lawyers for Paula Jones at any time. "We had no knowledge that Tripp was going to the Jones lawyers," he says. "In fact, we first learned about Tripp's contacts with the Jones legal team by reading the

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If Ken Starr is so bad, why hasn't Janet Reno removed him?

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Washington Post like everybody else." Bakaly also emphatically denies that anyone in Starr's office suggested to Linda Tripp that she coax Monica Lewinsky into refusing to file her false affidavit denying a sexual relationship with President Clinton until she had first received an acceptable job offer.

Bakaly also downplays the contact made by conservative lawyer Jerome Marcus with Paul Rosenzweig, a staff attorney in Starr's office. Marcus, apparently acting at the request of one of Starr's law partners, may have tipped off the staff attorney as to the Clinton–Lewinsky shenanigans. Since this communication took place several days before Mrs. Tripp first made direct contact with Jackie Bennett, Starr's deputy, the Clinton defense squad darkly speculates that Starr may have used the "extra time" to concoct a way to get involved in the Lewinsky investigation. It's hard to see what difference this would make as long as that "way" was defensible on its own terms. But, as it happens, Bakaly says the speculation is false: "We didn't spend the intervening period crafting a strategy to get jurisdiction over the Lewinsky matter. We didn't pay much attention to the contact. We thought it was immaterial, irrelevant."

Clinton defenders have resurrected the charge that Starr advised Gil Davis, Paula Jones's former attorney, on the issue of whether the President was immune from civil suits. But Starr's view on this matter has been well known for some time, and it is no impropriety for him to lay out his case to someone with whom he had no financial relationship.

It should also be remembered that Starr, to the great chagrin of the Jones attorneys, filed a motion requesting that Judge Susan Webber Wright stay discovery in the Jones case because the discovery process would adversely affect his own criminal investigation. Judge Wright ultimately ruled that discovery could continue, except to the extent that it sought information about Monica Lewinsky. Filing this motion was hardly the friendly act of a co-conspirator in a "perjury trap."

The "Out-of-Control" Prosecutor Argument. In a breathtaking act of political hypocrisy, Sen. Carl Levin (D., Mich.), the head cheerleader in Congress for the independent-counsel law, took to the Senate floor on October 8 to berate Ken Starr. Sounding much like Dr. Frankenstein bemoaning his own creation, Levin cites nearly every imaginable prosecutorial misdeed in his 13-page speech.

For example, Levin insists that Starr exceeded his jurisdiction when he instructed FBI agents to put a "body wire" on Linda Tripp for the purpose of taping four hours of conversation between her and Monica Lewinsky. But Starr's tactics were ultimately ratified by Attorney General Janet Reno and the supervising three-judge panel when they authorized Starr to investigate the Lewinsky matter. If Starr had exceeded his authority, why did Miss Reno then give him the green light to continue going down the Lewinsky witness-tampering path?

Levin accuses Starr of omitting exculpatory material from his impeachment report, including Monica Lewinsky's grand-jury statement that "no one ever asked [her] to lie." It's not true. In Section VI. A., Grounds for Impeachment, Starr writes: "Ms. Lewinsky has stated that the President never explicitly told her to lie."

Levin even complains that Starr acted "inconsistently" with Justice Department policy by subpoenaing Secret Service agents, citing President Bush in support. But Secret Service agents are law-enforcement officers required by federal law to report evidence of criminality. And three former attorneys general (Barr, Thornburgh, and Bell), one former President (Ford), one former Vice President (Quayle), and every reviewing judge have rejected the Administration's bogus "protective function" privilege claim.

In any case, if Ken Starr is so out-of-control, why hasn't Janet Reno exercised her authority under the independent-counsel statute to remove a delinquent prosecutor for "good cause"? If Starr violated Justice Department guidelines (which independent counsels are generally bound to follow), that would constitute enough "good cause" to justify a pink slip.

Sen. Levin's excuse for Miss Reno's inaction comes down to what Clinton apologists know best: raw politics. He lamely insists that she "is effectively powerless to rein in [Starr's] excesses because her discharge of him would be so reminiscent of the Saturday Night Massacre in which Archibald Cox, the prosecutor investigating Richard Nixon, was fired." But is Levin talking about the same attorney general whose constant refrain is that she "just looks at the law and the facts" and ignores politics? Could it be that even Attorney General Reno, Bill Clinton's appointee, has concluded that Starr has not abused his authority and, therefore, deserves to keep his job?

Of course, Ken Starr has committed his share of gaffes. He never should have talked to Steven Brill. Nor should he have entertained the job offer from Pepperdine University. But these missteps don't justify the "perjury trap" claptrap of Carville & Co. Their manufactured outrage is an obvious attempt to shift attention away from a very unpleasant subject: the President's felonious conduct. **NR**

■ **THE SCANDAL III** ■

Harassment Hypocrites

Sexual-harassment law has new-found friends.

CATHY YOUNG

THE hypocrisy of the feminists who suddenly rethought sexual harassment when their ally in the White House

Miss Young is a research associate at the Cato Institute. Her book, *Ceasefire: Why Women and Men Must Join Forces to Achieve Equality*, is forthcoming from the Free Press (February).

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Hillsdale College Proudly Announces the Establishment of The Herbert H. Dow II Chair and Program in American Journalism

In recent weeks, a major American newspaper has offered to pay over $10 million to settle claims against it, even though no lawsuit had been filed, because a reporter based a story on over 2,000 stolen e-mails. A Pulitzer Prize finalist had to resign after admitting that she fabricated quotations and names of the people who supposedly made them. A writer at a prominent magazine was fired after admitting that he made up material in 27 out of 41 articles over the past three years. A major television network recently issued an apology, fired several people and reprimanded another for excluding important evidence that conflicted with their approach to a story. A major weekly magazine also apologized publicly for "mistakes" made in a report. Is it any wonder that phrases like "Media's Battered Credibility," "A Journalistic Felony in a Class by Itself" and "Dark Cloud Looms over U.S. Journalism" have appeared in recent headlines?

Designed specifically to combat abuses like these, the Herbert H. Dow II Chair and Program in American Journalism was created with a leadership gift from The Herbert H. and Barbara C. Dow Foundation. The Mission Statement documents the Program's dedication to "the restoration of ethical, high-minded journalism standards, and the reformation of our cultural, political and social practices." Like Hillsdale College itself, the Dow Journalism Program "seeks to educate students to become defenders of traditional values, passing on to posterity the blessings of our American heritage and the legacy of First Principles intended by our Founding Fathers."

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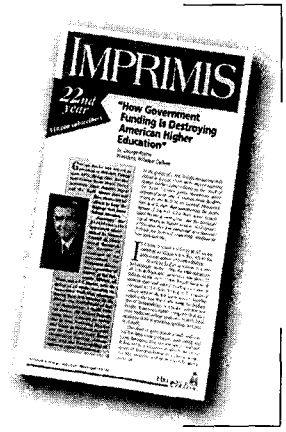

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found himself in the dock has been discussed *ad nauseam*. But there is plenty of hypocrisy to go around.

Until comparatively recently, conservative commentators nearly universally viewed the battle against sexual harassment as both a radical feminist effort to

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Clinton's conservative critics were quick to discover a concern with sexual harassment.

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polarize the sexes and an expansion of government power, giving federal agencies and the courts the authority to micromanage workplace etiquette. They rightly pointed out that there were few more egregious examples of judge-made law than turning Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits sex discrimination in employment, into a prohibition of "unwelcome" sexual attentions at work.

How times have changed. After Paula Jones came forward in 1994 with her claim that then-governor Clinton had subjected her to indecent advances three years earlier, some of Clinton's conservative critics were as quick to discover a concern with sexual harassment as most feminists were to abandon it. The Rutherford Institute, which had specialized in the defense of religious liberties, not only championed Mrs. Jones's lawsuit—whose religious angle is not immediately clear—but even filed a brief for the plaintiff in a Supreme Court case some have regarded as relevant to Mrs. Jones's, *Burlington Industries* v. *Ellerth*. (The issue was whether sexual advances by a superior should be grounds for strict legal liability even if a perceived threat of reprisals was not carried out; the court eventually said yes.) After Mrs. Jones's claim was dismissed, conservative legal scholar Bruce Fein, who had previously criticized the Supreme Court for eliminating the requirement of either economic or psychological detriment to the plaintiff in sexual-harassment cases, assailed Judge Susan Webber Wright for imposing such a requirement in the Jones case.

Also in Paula Jones's corner was the Independent Women's Forum, which had previously played an admirable role in challenging sexual-harassment hysteria—exemplified by a 1996 article in its magazine, *The Women's Quarterly*, "Shrinking Violets at the Office." (Full disclosure: I am co-founder of the Women's Freedom Network, which has sometimes been characterized as a rival group to the IWF.)

Earlier this year, the IWF allied itself with the Dulles-area chapter of the National Organization for Women in Virginia, which broke away from the national leadership over its support for Bill Clinton. A joint statement issued in May declared that "IWF and Dulles NOW unequivocally oppose sexual harassment in the workplace" and urged policies to ensure that "employees are not subject to sexual exploitation—even once."

This was a transparent reference to the Jones case, in which the judge held that a single sexual advance was not legally actionable. Of course, if such a one-strike-and-you're-out principle were to be ensconced in law, based on a concept as vague as "sexual exploitation," it would surely be applied to far lesser offenses than the extremely boorish overture alleged by Mrs. Jones.

The Lewinsky story has created even more enthusiasm on the Right for sexual-harassment law. As White House spinmeisters recite their "It's only sex and sex

lies" mantra, Clinton's critics—from Rep. James Rogan (R., Calif.) on ABC's *This Week* to pundit Laura Ingraham on *Politically Incorrect*—have resorted to a clever response: If the President gets away with perjury in a sexual-harassment case, sexual-harassment laws will be weakened. (This argument was first deployed in the Starr report: "To excuse a party who lied or concealed evidence on the ground that the evidence covered only 'personal' or 'private' behavior would frustrate the goals that Congress and the courts have sought to achieve in enacting and interpreting the Nation's sexual-harassment laws.")

Yet, whatever one thinks of Mr. Clinton's conduct, the fact that a harassment lawsuit could turn into a fishing expedition in which— in the hope of uncovering a "pattern"—the defendant is questioned under oath about his sexual relations with another government employee should stand as an indictment of such litigation. There is nothing wrong with pointing out that the liberals' defense of Clinton contradicts their (and the Clinton Administration's) professed allegiance to the anti-sexual-harassment crusade. Republicans have every right to argue that, regardless of the merits of any specific law, tolerance for perjury would hurt the integrity of the justice system in general. But they don't have to wax enthusiastic about sexual-harassment claims in particular, as Rep. Rogan did at some length. Again, the problem is that conservatives have started to sound as if they shared that allegiance. From them, the rhetoric of sexual harassment sounds jarring—not unlike NOW president Patricia Ireland's recent talk about the sanctity of marriage on CNN's *Larry King Live*, in defense of Hillary Rodham Clinton's decision to stand by her man.

When I asked IWF executive vice president Anita Blair if conservatives were going too far in allying themselves with the anti-sexual-harassment cause, she said, "We have to be careful not to endorse the flawed legal analyses that have evolved" and added that, in this context, civil-rights laws have been "carried to absurd conclusions." Yet, given an opening on *This Week* in April to explain the conservative position on the current law, she said only, "We accept that sexual harassment exists, that it is wrong, and that it should be illegal" (adding the weak caveat that in cases of "interpersonal friction" there should be more reliance on families, schools, and churches to instill norms of civility). She also told me that "by any plain English interpretation of 'sexual harassment,' Clinton's admitted behavior"—a sexual affair with a lower-status employee in his office—"fits this term as the feminists themselves have defined it." As to whether conservatives should be embracing such definitions, she said that

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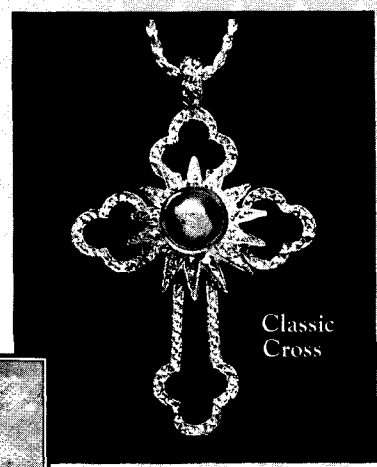

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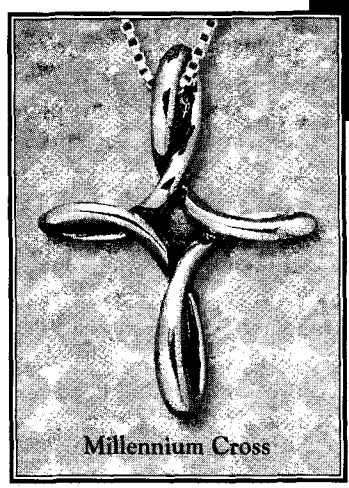

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"it's only right that the proponents of the law be held to these standards."

In fact, under the current legal regime, the fact that a woman aggressively pursued her boss, flashing her underwear at him and initiating oral sex without waiting to be asked, would not have necessarily kept her from filing a harassment suit—and possibly wangling a handsome settlement—had she later changed her mind. It is also true that some of the feminists leading Clinton's defense, notably law professor Susan Estrich, have in the past explicitly argued that sex between a superior and a subordinate is not truly consensual and should be subject to legal strictures. But again, it's one thing to take feminists to task for their opportunism, and another for conservatives to take up the slack in talking about "power differentials" and referring to the affair as, in the words of Linda Chavez, possibly "the most important sexual-harassment case in U.S. history."

In an article on the website of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, Noemie Emery, a frequent contributor to conservative publications, does not invoke the terminology of sexual harassment, but she speaks of "Clinton's alleged seduction of a young girl in his employ." Yet to cast Miss Lewinsky as a seduced maiden is to abandon all belief in personal responsibility. She is not even a poster girl for the view that sex without love is always about male exploitation of women. This was a young woman who by her own account was not in love when she embarked on the affair—and who never let her heartbreak over the Big Creep get in the way of a good time, treating a fling with the "nutrition guy" as just another amenity at a spa.

Some conservatives have a soft spot for the concept of sexual harassment for other reasons. A few of them, such as Irving Kristol, have long viewed this feminist effort with qualified sympathy, as a camouflaged back-to-the-pedestal movement—a roundabout way to reclaim traditional feminine protections from predatory male sexuality. But this is wishful thinking.

What the harassment crusade seeks is the privilege of being treated like a lady when you feel like it, without having to act like one. In several cases (such as *Swentek* v. *USAir* in 1987), courts have specifically held that a woman's use of "foul language with sexual innuendo" did not bar her from seeking legal recourse against similar behavior by her male co-workers, as long as she had not "welcomed the particular conduct in question." While a few women have found themselves on the receiving end of sexual-harassment complaints over dirty jokes on the job—from other women or from men who have caught the sensitivity bug—their behavior, for the most part, has been exempted from the new strictures.

Nor does harassment law have anything to do with morality. Ironically, the growth of these laws has been paralleled by legal challenges to company rules banning adulterous affairs between co-workers (which, unlike sexual-harassment policies, had been voluntarily adopted by employers). Under the new dispensation, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, such affairs are okay as long as the paramours have signed an agreement attesting that neither of them is being sexually harassed—an arrangement that manages to condone adultery and trample on privacy at the same time.

As Daphne Patai, a professor at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), writes in her new book *Heterophobia: Sexual Harassment and the Future of Feminism*, the concept of sexual harassment now serves primarily as "the conduit by which some extreme feminist tenets about the relations between the sexes enter everyday life with minimum challenge." Today, as the popular sympathy for Clinton seems to indicate, the culture may be ready for a backlash against "sexual McCarthyism," which has its roots in the feminist-led harassment witch-hunts, not in the vast right-wing conspiracy.

This should be an occasion to push for the replacement of current laws with a civil tort based on personal injury rather than sexual discrimination, and limited to the extortion of sexual favors and other serious abuses. But will political convenience get in the way?

I asked Anita Blair if the appearance of conservative support for sexual-harassment laws posed any danger. "Well, I don't think there's any more danger," she said. "I don't think there's much more bad that can happen in this area of the law." Even accepting this argument, surely there is at least the danger that conservatives will undercut their ability to criticize existing laws and policies. It would be ironic if, just as Bill Clinton and his feminist cronies are stripping cultural legitimacy from the sexual-harassment crusade, his conservative critics were to give it a boost. **NR**

■ THE HILL ■

Backdraft

The pro-Clinton backlash is a no-show.

KATE O'BEIRNE

WASHINGTON is in thrall at the moment to two competing conventional wisdoms. Wisdom #1: A backlash is brewing across the nation against the GOP's supposed anti-Clinton crusade, threatening to limit Republican gains in November to the slim-to-none range. Wisdom #2: Republicans will have a good election, then return to the merry business of impeaching the President, whose only hope of survival is forestalling conviction in the Senate. As it happens, both of these are wrong: there is no backlash, but neither is there any certainty that President Clinton will be impeached in the House after the elections.

Republicans have returned home to campaign bolstered by recent party polls that give the GOP a seven-point advantage in a generic ballot matchup, a historically high number that suggests the impeachment "backlash" is a figment of the media's imagination. On the other hand, don't expect Republicans to campaign on their investigation of Ken Starr's allegations, because those same polls clearly warn politicians that voters don't want to hear about the Lewinsky scandal. Republicans will crow about last year's tax cuts and this year's surplus, but there won't be a peep about a possible impeachment.

Republicans are banking on modest gains, with most analysts predicting a pickup of 8 to 12 House seats and 3 or 4 Senate seats thanks to heavy GOP turnout. Although there is some evidence that Democrats' interest in voting increased in the past weeks, Republicans still have a motivation edge. According to party polls, 69 per cent of Republicans intend to vote, compared to 58 per cent of Democrats—with the latter number expected to sink as impeachment talk declines. And the President's still-high job approval rating won't help Democrats much, because those who disapprove of his job perform-

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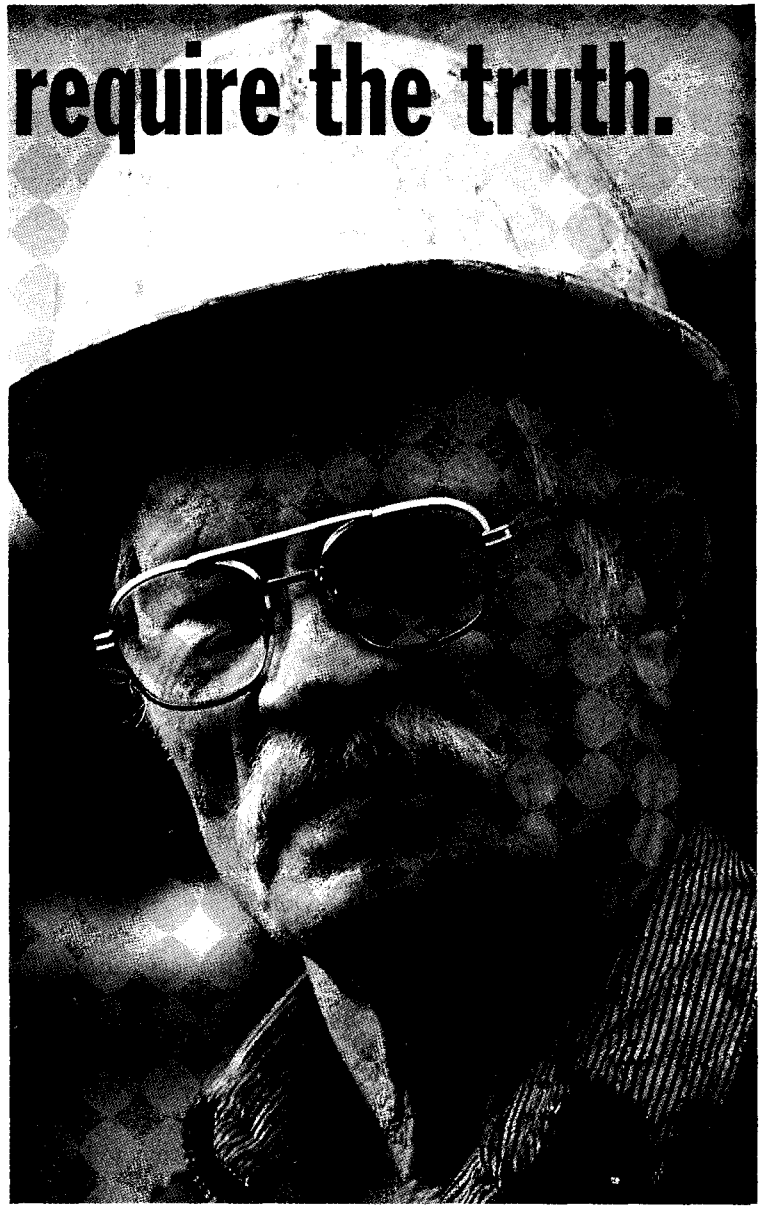

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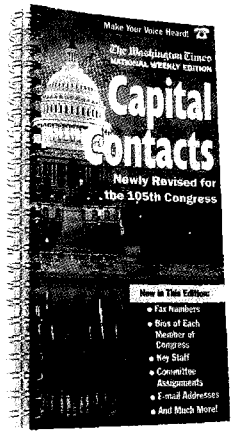

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ance are more likely to vote, by a margin of 16 points.

One GOP strategist cites the higher propensity of Republican women to vote (74 per cent of GOP women *v.* 59 per cent of Democratic women) and proclaims, "Say good-bye to the gender gap." And conservative voters are among the most motivated: 80 per cent of "very conservative" voters plan to cast ballots, compared with only 53 per cent of "liberal" voters. Pollster John Zogby's surveys confirm that Republicans' conservative base is energized. "Conservative Christians will vote in monsoon weather," he predicts.

Republican leaders are nervous that their disappointing budget negotiations with Bill Clinton could depress their conservative base (the deal is indeed depressing). But they expect that GOP voters will appreciate that concessions on funding for the International Monetary Fund, billions in "emergency spending," and insurance coverage of contraceptives for federal employees were necessary to avoid a government shutdown engineered by the man who is the only real issue this year for the GOP grassroots: Bill Clinton. They also anticipate getting the credit for boosting defense spending while trashing the President's tobacco legislation and his proposed new tax increases, child-care spending, and HMO regulations.

■

Don't expect Republicans to campaign on the Starr allegations.

■

Republicans are just happy to have made it out of the budget negotiations alive. Says one House leadership aide: "It could have been much worse. Thank God the Democrats decided to leave town; they were holding all the cards."

Ironically, it's the femme fatale, j.g., Monica Lewinsky, who helped give tax cuts the kiss of death. Senate Republicans figured that the $80-billion tax cut passed by the House wasn't large enough to justify a fight with the President who charged that the cut would "jeopardize Social Security." And who needs a tax cut when the GOP base is already motivated to vote by its disgust with the Big Creep?

Again, polls indicate that a Republican message emphasizing last year's tax cut and the balanced budget, the strong economy, and Internal Revenue Service reform appeals to a majority of voters. But these encouraging poll results come with a stern warning from party strategists. Media polls and party polls alike consistently indicate that a majority of voters believe the President should be punished, but don't want him removed from office. And because the public has settled on the appropriate punishment, it doesn't want to hear about the allegations. So much for the "I word." By a margin of 2 to 1, voters favor candidates who talk about policy over those who either criticize or defend the President's behavior. So GOP candidates have been told that when it comes to impeachment, the less said the better.

Only Republican voters, by a margin of 2 to 1, favor impeachment, and that's not enough to keep the process moving forward in the House. Although many observers just assume that Republican lawmakers will support impeachment, it's doubtful that a majority will vote to impeach if the current situation persists. As long as the public in general, and Democrats unanimously, oppose impeachment it is unlikely that Republicans will attempt to send the matter on to the Senate. A successful partisan vote to impeach might not even be possible with so many Republicans queasy about removing the President "for sex and lying about sex." At present it's not even clear that a majority of Judiciary Committee members has concluded that Bill Clinton's behavior amounts to an impeachable offense. If only three Republicans agree with Committee Democrats that the President's conduct does not constitute the kind of public corruption that warrants impeachment, no resolution will be forwarded to the full House.

November's elections will change this dynamic only if the results convince Democrats that their party has suffered enough at the hands of Bill Clinton. Should Democrats lose House seats in the double digits, and five seats in the Senate, Bill Clinton is bound to be blamed. As Democrats look toward 2000, they could conclude that as long as Bill Clinton remains in the White House their party will be unable to put the Lewinsky matter behind them. Barring that, Bill Clinton's long-overdue day of reckoning just gets more overdue. **NR**

■ IN THE STATES ■

50 Clintons

Republican governors follow Clinton's lead.

STEPHEN MOORE

MORE than at any other time in America's history, our state governments today are under the command and control of the GOP. Thirty-two states, including 7 of the 8 largest, have Republican governors. The confident talk at the Republican National Committee these days is that another 3 to 5 governorships may move into the Republican column come November, including those of such politically prized states as Colorado, Florida, and Georgia. Only in California do Democrats seem likely to win back a major governorship. Meanwhile, in just the past six years Republicans have gained some five hundred state legislative seats; again, more pickups are expected on election day.

Given this decisive Republican tilt in state politics, one might expect state budgets to be shrinking. But they're not. They're hemorrhaging. Over the past three years state governments have been surfing on a wave of prosperity that has filled their coffers to the brim with tax collections. The result? Since 1995 state budgets have expanded nearly 50 per cent faster than even the federal budget.

To be sure, the biggest spenders have been liberal Democrats like John Kitzhaber of Oregon and Lawton Chiles of Florida. But on spending matters it's getting harder to detect the difference between the Ds and the Rs in the nation's statehouses. This year many Republican governors recommended 7, 8, and even 10 per cent increases in expenditures—this, in an era of close to zero inflation. When asked about these prodigious GOP-spon-

Mr. Moore is director of fiscal-policy studies at the Cato Institute and the author of the Cato study, "A Fiscal Policy Report Card on America's Governors."

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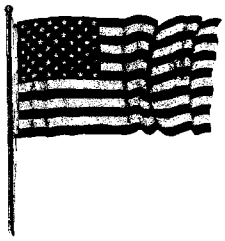

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sored budgets, George Voinovich, the liberal two-term Republican governor of Ohio, who appears headed to the U.S. Senate in January, explained: "We recognize that there are problems to be solved and that there is a role for government to play." Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson admits that there is "a new breed of activism among us."

Many governors have begun to nickel-and-dime taxpayers to death with fees, fines, tolls, and excise taxes.

Republicans this year are showcasing Clintonite spending initiatives for children's programs, school construction, environmental clean-up, day-care subsidies, and job training. If a Ronald Reagan lower-tax agenda got these governors elected in the first place, most are now gambling that parroting Bill Clinton will keep them in office.

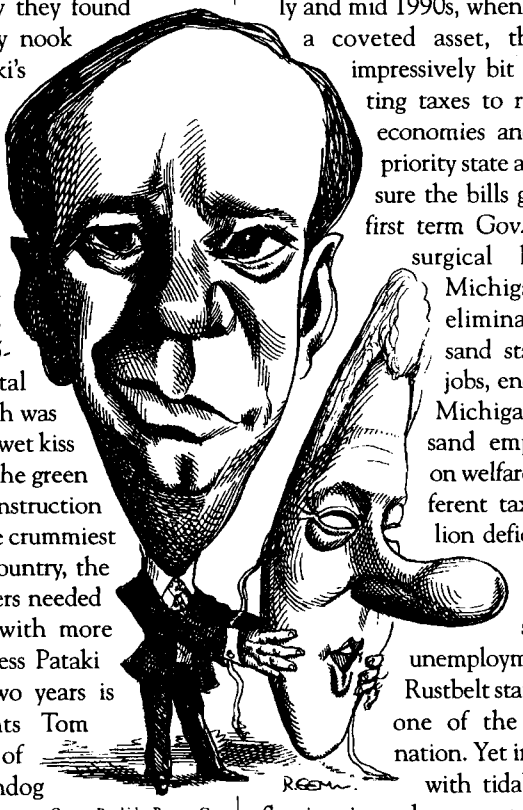
The *Washington Post* recently ran a front-page story describing the Republican governors' schizophrenic new philosophy as "conservative and pro-government at the same time [*sic*]." The governors are nurturing a "softer image," the story reports. New social spending is to be found "everywhere in Republican budgets." *NR* reporter Ramesh Ponnuru discovered that the *Post* article was proudly faxed by the Republican Governors Association to GOP donors and grassroots activists.

Consider the fiscal odyssey of three of the GOP's highest-profile governors: John Rowland of Connecticut, Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey, and George Pataki of New York. In the early 1990s they vanquished the murderers' row of tax-and-spend liberals: Lowell Weicker, James Florio, and Mario Cuomo. They all won their races by preaching a combination of pro-growth, Reagan-style income-tax cuts and old-fashioned fiscal belt-tightening. They all confounded their critics (and allies, as well) by delivering promised tax relief ahead of schedule.

In George Pataki's first two years in office, New York's budget shrank by $1 billion and New Yorkers' tax bills were slashed by $3 billion. John Rowland cut taxes, froze the state workforce, enacted tough welfare-to-work requirements, and converted a $500-million deficit into a four-year $1-billion surplus. "We are overthrowing all the unworkable liberal abstractions of the past," Pataki told a Heritage Foundation audience two years ago, "and replacing them with a revolution of conservative ideas."

Then each of these governors caught the spending virus. Christine Whitman recommended new gasoline and cigarette taxes to pay for an enormous 8 per cent budget hike to fund such essentials as bike paths ($15 million), a state pay hike ($116 million), and "members' projects"—a patrician's way of saying "pork"—including Yogi Berra and Frank Sinatra museums ($60 million). The *Hartford Courant* pilloried Rowland's latest budget for "pouring new money into traditional Democratic programs—education, the environment, children's programs, and rent and nursing-home subsidies for seniors."

As for all those "unworkable liberal abstractions," somehow they found their way into every nook and cranny of Pataki's obese $70-billion 1999 budget. The one-year $5-billion spending spike was the largest ever. Just six months earlier Pataki had infuriated state conservatives by endorsing a $1.75-billion environmental bond initiative, which was nothing more than a wet kiss to the labor unions, the green lobby, and GOP construction contractors. With the crummiest bond rating in the country, the last thing New Yorkers needed was to be saddled with more debt. "All the progress Pataki made in his first two years is unraveling," laments Tom Carroll, president of the taxpayer watchdog group, Change NY.



George Pataki by Roman Genn

And so it goes with most of the nation's 32 Republican governors. In 1998 states were confronted with an enormous $40-billion aggregate surplus—the biggest pool of excess tax collections in more than twenty years. About $6 billion was passed back to taxpayers. The other $34 billion was either spent or dumped into a "rainy day" fund.

Where did things go wrong? The state capitals, after all, should be the incubators for conservative Republican policy innovations. And for years they have been just that. On many issues, Republican governors have transformed the policy landscape—in almost all cases for the better. Following the lead of Michigan's John Engler and New Jersey's Christine Whitman, more than half the states have enacted supply-side tax-rate cuts. Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson and Minnesota's Arne Carlson have been tireless crusaders for school choice. George W. Bush of Texas defeated the parasitic Texas trial lawyers and enacted tort reform that has cut legal costs in the state by nearly one-quarter. It has not been so much the GOP Congress as GOP governors who are responsible for the one-third reduction in welfare dependency.

Herein lies the enigma of the GOP governors. In the slow-growth years of the early and mid 1990s, when every dime was a coveted asset, these governors impressively bit the bullet, cutting taxes to re-energize their economies and starving low-priority state agencies to make sure the bills got paid. In his first term Gov. Engler took a surgical knife to the Michigan budget: he eliminated five thousand state-government jobs, ended the dole for Michigan's fifty thousand employable adults on welfare, and cut 16 different taxes. A $1.5-billion deficit was converted into a $500-million surplus, and the unemployment rate for this Rustbelt state plummeted to one of the lowest in the nation. Yet in the late 1990s, with tidal waves of cash flowing into the state treasuries, Engler and others now spend and hoard.

Many governors have begun to nickel-and-dime taxpayers to death with fees, fines, tolls, and excise taxes. More than half the governors have raised the state gas tax, with the biggest increases coming in Wisconsin, New Jersey, Utah, and Mon-

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tana. Almost two-thirds of the governors have called for tobacco tax hikes. All this, even though the tax-cutting issue still packs a potent electoral punch, as evidenced by Jim Gilmore's 1997 "No Car Tax" gubernatorial campaign in Virginia.

Ten years ago, when Democrats ruled the roost, America was riding the crest of a similar expansion—one on which it seemed the sun would never set. States were cash rich and governors like Michael Dukakis (remember the Massachusetts Miracle?), Bruce Babbitt, and Mario Cuomo spent opulently. It was Democrats in those days who boasted of a "new breed of activism." When the punchbowl was whisked away, these once-popular governors were suddenly up to their bushy eyebrows in red ink and, soon enough, out of office. "We are broke," a deflated Mario Cuomo acknowledged in a rare moment of candor in 1990, "down to the marrow of our bones."

Could the same ignominious fate await Republican big spenders? The lesson that the good times never roll on forever is something that lawmakers seem genetically incapable of learning. Most Republican governors are riding high this year with approval ratings around 70 per cent. If the economy tanks, these free-spending Republican governors will be the first political casualties. **NR**

■ **THE CONTINENT** ■

Checking Slovakia

The West misreads the poor man of Central Europe.

JOHNATHAN SUNLEY

Bratislava, Slovakia

THERE is good news for Western politicians and investors who have spent the last couple of months chiding themselves for having "lost" Russia: a modest consolation prize called Slovakia. On the same day that Germans voted to end nearly two decades of rule by Helmut Kohl, the electorate of this small, scenic country a few hundred miles to the east chose to send a similar message to the figure who had dominated its political life for almost half as long: Vladimir Meciar.

From the cheering and jeering in the West that greeted the news of Meciar's apparent defeat (in fact, his party still emerged with the largest share of the vote, but it won't be able to forge a new ruling coalition), you'd have thought that Saddam Hussein himself had fallen. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright once described Slovakia as a "black hole in the heart of Europe," while the annual report of an investment fund that purports to specialize in this region compares the place to Cuba—adding that this "seems unfair to Cuba, since there seem to be some prospects of reform there."

Anyone who has spent any time in Slovakia recently would not recognize these caricatures. Sure, the capital city, Bratislava, is not so sophisticated (nor so sordid) as Prague—which became the capital of the Czech Republic after the two halves of what had been Czechoslovakia decided to go their separate ways back in 1992. Nor are there the hordes of Western consultants and students that make Budapest in neighboring Hungary seem so cosmopolitan.

But many Slovaks seem to prefer it this way. Having only just re-emerged on the map of Europe after more than a thousand years of being somebody else's province, they are cautious about casting their identity aside again in the headlong rush toward globalization. In any case, the economy's performance has been among the most impressive in the former Eastern Bloc. Growth this year may reach 6 per cent (well ahead of the more highly regarded Hungary or Poland), while annual inflation and the percentage of unemployed are both down in single digits. And the two countries' currencies having started at parity at the time of their "velvet divorce," the Slovak crown is now slightly stronger than its Czech counterpart.

But what also distinguishes Slovakia from several of its neighbors is the low level of foreign investment: a mere $2 billion since the collapse of Communism in 1989 for a population of five million, compared with ten times as much in Hungary for a population only twice the size. This is not because Slovakia lacks alluring factories to buy or well-trained workers to employ. Rather, Meciar's "hands-off" approach toward outside investment has been based on the imperative (as he sees it) of building up a strong domestic middle class—something no other country attempting the "transition" from a planned economy to the free market has come close to achieving. Naturally, this policy has at times led to questionable deals and given rise to allegations of "crony capitalism." But corruption and mafia-linked crime in Slovakia are not the virulent epidemics they have become in Hungary—let alone Russia or Ukraine.

■

From the cheering in the West that greeted the news of Meciar's apparent defeat, you'd have thought that Saddam Hussein himself had fallen.

■

Meciar's real sin, however, is that he doesn't belong to either of those political castes which—encouraged and bankrolled by their allies in the West—have throughout Central and Eastern Europe formed an unholy but highly adaptable and successful alliance: the ex-Communists and the liberal intelligentsia.

Though often derided as a classic Communist-type "big boss," Meciar was in fact expelled from the Communist Party in 1969 (for opposing the previous year's Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia) and is far less beholden to the old *nomenklatura* than many of those now hoping to succeed him. And having been denied a passport until 1990, Meciar also lacks the languages and diplomatic finesse of opponents who sneer at his failure to find favor with the "international community." Slovakia has been excluded from the first rounds both of NATO expansion and of membership negotiations with the European Union.

These opponents have proved skilled in

Mr. Sunley, an observer of the elections in Slovakia for the British Helsinki Human Rights Group, has written widely on contemporary developments in Central and Eastern Europe.

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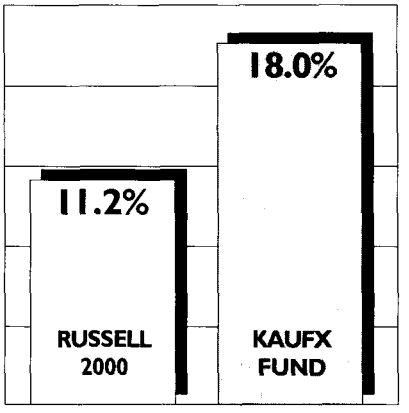

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manipulating their contacts in the West to amplify their criticisms. Earlier this year, for example, Freedom House issued a report complaining that the media in Slovakia are only "partly free." True, the still state-owned public television and radio channels tend to be pro-government. Far more popular, however, is a nationwide commercial station, TV Markiza (co-owned by cosmetics heir Ronald Lauder), which when not showing soap operas or soft porn is a mouthpiece for the opposition to Meciar.

This same channel has contributed directly to another of the problems that has ruined Slovakia's reputation in the West: the mass exodus of Gypsies to countries like Britain or Canada, which—Markiza says—will grant them asylum so that they can avoid racially motivated persecution at home. Since cases of such persecution are in truth extremely rare, the majority of these would-be economic migrants are turned back— but not before Western publics have been led to believe that Slovakia is similar to the old South Africa (only without the sun).

Another regular reproach is that, intolerant of pluralism, Meciar's authoritarian administration has been especially hard on NGOs (non-governmental organizations). The problem is that many of the fine-sounding foundations and civic initiatives which in fact thrive in Slovakia are in practice anti-government organizations—and foreign-funded ones at that. Click on the website of the slavishly pro-opposition Slovak Helsinki Committee, for example, and you will find a welcome from the Office of the Austrian Chancellor— which has for years been casting doubt on the ability of Austria's upstart neighbor to survive.

Unwittingly, even the U.S. taxpayer has become a player in the campaign to oust Meciar. Over the summer, a number of voter-education projects—handsomely financed by the United States Information Service and the United States Agency for International Development—were launched across Slovakia, with the laudable aim of encouraging voters to exercise their democratic rights. "Programs supported by the U.S. Government are non-partisan," commented the embassy official in charge. Yet the material disseminated by one of the main groups benefiting from this largesse, OK '98, read: "Like the majority of our fellow citizens, we feel a deep distrust in our government."

In the event, despite all the forewarnings about probable government interference and intimidation in the elections (a last-minute appeal from the National Democratic Institute protested about the "climate of anxiety" deliberately created by Meciar), none of the two hundred international observers who watched the voting-day procedures from beginning to end found anything untoward. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which was co-ordinating their efforts, seemed pleasantly surprised.

Then the news broke that Meciar's party had after all won a narrow majority, and the OSCE quickly recast its opinion. Now the election, while technically correct, had been flawed by media bias and a general lack of trust. In a separate statement, the International Republican Institute went further: there had not been "a level playing field for parties in the campaign" (judging by the number of posters, it seems Meciar had actually been outspent) and Gypsies in particular had not received "adequate voter-education information."

Still, all's well that ends well. Rather than hang about and try to form some sort of minority government, Meciar has announced that he is giving up politics altogether (not typically authoritarian behavior). Thus the initiative now rests with the former opposition parties to form their own coalition government—something they will probably succeed in doing later this month.

But the road ahead brings new challenges. Within a week after Meciar's announcement, the National Bank devalued the Slovak crown by 20 per cent. In addition, the government of Britain declared it would introduce visas for Slovak citizens—a restriction not faced by Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, etc. Because neither of these moves will endear the government now being formed to the people who have supposedly just voted for it, the government may be tempted to divert popular attention by carrying on about Meciar's various crimes and misdemeanors.

However, if the government pillories Meciar—even placing him on trial as several opposition parties threatened before the election—then Slovakia will risk re-entering the dark ages from which it has just emerged. **NR**

■ IN DISSENT ■

Animal Spirit

Respect for God's creatures should be a conservative impulse.

MATTHEW SCULLY

I RECENTLY came across an issue of *Outdoor Life*, the sportsman's Bible, and noticed an ad for something called "the Wayne Carlton bear call." The bear season finds hunters using an array of technology out in the field, and this little gadget makes the spot-on sound of "the frantic squalling of a terrified cub." The adult bear hears it and comes a-running—while the intrepid sportsman waits.

The idea, in short, is to turn one of the bear's finer qualities, its fierce protectiveness of cubs, against him. The creature's very virtues—or strengths, or evolutionary survival skills, or whatever you want to call them—become his undoing. It seems a little unfair. What kind of man would use a thing like that?

Somehow, when we were given dominion over the earth and its creatures, I don't think this is quite what He had in mind. Conservatives are wary of modern environmentalism with its strain of nature worship. But there's a smug insensibility in this other attitude that is every bit as bad. It is the Imperial Self, armed and dangerous, a fundamentally vulgar vision of man as special pleader, man the all-conquering consumer facing the universe with limitless entitlements and appetites to be met no matter what the costs. Want a bearskin rug for the living room? Go forth then to bait and slay the beast—bring along the Wayne Carlton, and don't forget the keg. Wildlife hindering new development? Bring dominion to field and forest, exterminate the creatures, and raise up thy new strip mall.

Paul Johnson in his 1996 book *The*

Mr. Scully, an *NR* contributing editor, is based in Herndon, Va.

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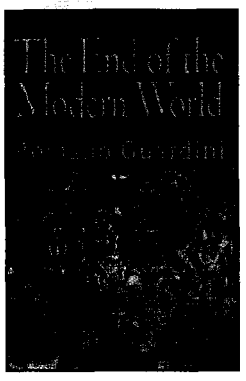

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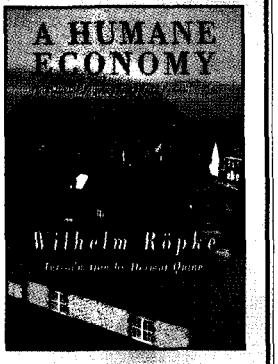

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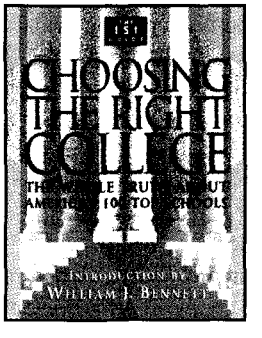

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Quest for God devotes a few pages to a quite sympathetic view of animals—adding, however, that the Bible affords them little comfort. True enough, but what's there is worth recalling. The animals, at creation, were sent forth with a "blessing" of their own. Though after Genesis they appear mostly as property, they're also accorded a certain amount of solici-

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The New Testament is silent on the animals beyond the theme of gentleness, the assurance that not a sparrow falls without His knowing.

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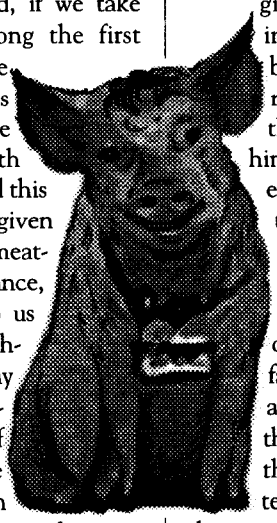
tude, as in Proverbs 12:10: "The righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." A handful of other admonitions enjoin kindness, and in the Commandments it turns out even the cattle are to be given rest on the Sabbath.

Hunters in the Bible are folks like Nimrod and Esau, who tend to have trouble living peaceably among their fellow human beings, too. Indeed, if we take Genesis at its word, among the first instructions to man in the Garden were to keep his mitts off the critters (and vice versa) and be content with the herbs and the trees. And this comes just after we've been given dominion. The Catholic "meatless Friday" as a sign of penance, purity, and peace came to us (via a papal boost to the fishing industry, with the Friday of course symbolizing something else) from this view of predation as a consequence of the Fall. Certain Jewish dietary laws carry a similar sense of meat as bearing the stain of violence and needing sanctification.



Dominion, Wayne Carlton style, doesn't get the go-ahead until the Covenant with Noah, even as the dove debuts as symbol of peace and then only as concession to our incorrigible weakness. When He says, "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth," it's not exactly our proudest moment, and He is not bidding us to pursue that vision. Echoing throughout is the call to rapprochement at least in our hearts, as when Isaiah, hardly the maudlin type, describes predator and prey dwelling together, with a little child to lead them.

The New Testament is silent on the animals beyond the theme of gentleness, the assurance that not a sparrow falls without His knowing, the ass bearing Jesus into Jerusalem, and the lamb as a symbol of guiltless suffering—fairly high honors for all three creatures. True, the Gadarene swine don't fare so well. But the idea in Scripture seems to be that the animals have a beauty and dignity of their own, they also bear the Master's touch, and (never mind the whole business of "animal rights") practicing kindness toward them is part of our own glory.

"Dominion" today is a bit like the Constitution, stretched to cover all sorts of abuses committed in its good name. Though he makes no mention of animals, Pope John Paul II captured the bigger point here in a 1991 encyclical describing a disordered relationship with the natural world: "Man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as though it did not have its own requisites and a prior God-given purpose, which man can indeed develop but must not betray. Instead of carrying out his role as a cooperator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him."

Johnson, a conservative Catholic, actually rises in defense of farm animals, arguing that "God allowed us to live off the beasts of the fields and the forest because there was no other way," but that technology now provides an abundance of perfectly good substitutes. "Gradually this realization will take hold of us. The rise of factory farming, whereby food producers cannot remain competitive except by subjecting animals to life-cycles of unspeakable deprivation, has hastened this process. The human spirit revolts at what we have been doing."

Pretty radical, but I'll second that. After all, we're the only carnivore with a choice in the matter. Only I'm not so sure about the "revolt" part. Few adults have any illusions about our farm factories or the tender mercies accorded each creature that creepeth therein—the bright, sensitive pig dangling by a rear hoof as it's processed along, squealing in horror; the veal calf taken from its mother, tethered, and locked away in a tiny stall for all of its brief, wretched existence. It would make us sick to watch, and yet our demand for the resulting products only gets more furious. With that distinctively modern mix of sentimentality and ruthlessness, we get all weepy over *Babe*, while the sheer momentum of consumer demand leaves no time for the least modicum of mercy.

What a terrifying thought that His care might actually extend to those creatures, too, and that in our treatment of them we bear not only the powers of dominion but also the possibilities of grace. **NR**

■ THE CULTURE ■

Hell, Yes

Even if you're not going to Hell, you should believe in it.

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

THE crowd was done applauding at the Sony Lincoln Square Theater, a glitzy neo-Vegas multiplex across from the Metropolitan Opera. Evidently the two guys directly in front of me had been pondering the otherworldly settings of the movie we had just seen. In a voice that he didn't trouble to lower, the one asked the other: "Hey, can you go to Hell for masturbating?"

"What I want to know about Heaven," his pal replied, "is, Where's the sushi?"

The exchange, which could take place as it did on Manhattan's Upper West Side but not in too many other locales, was prompted by Robin Williams in *What Dreams May Come*. The movie had opened the day before to a response from the respectable critics as universally sneering as any movie had got since *The Avengers*. Yet even in this neighborhood, where

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the sociological profile is strictly Starbucks—upper middle class, secular, and liberal—and where folks pay attention to reviews, the theater was packed, the audience appreciative. Appreciative, mind you, of a film that posits the existence not only of Heaven but also of Hell.

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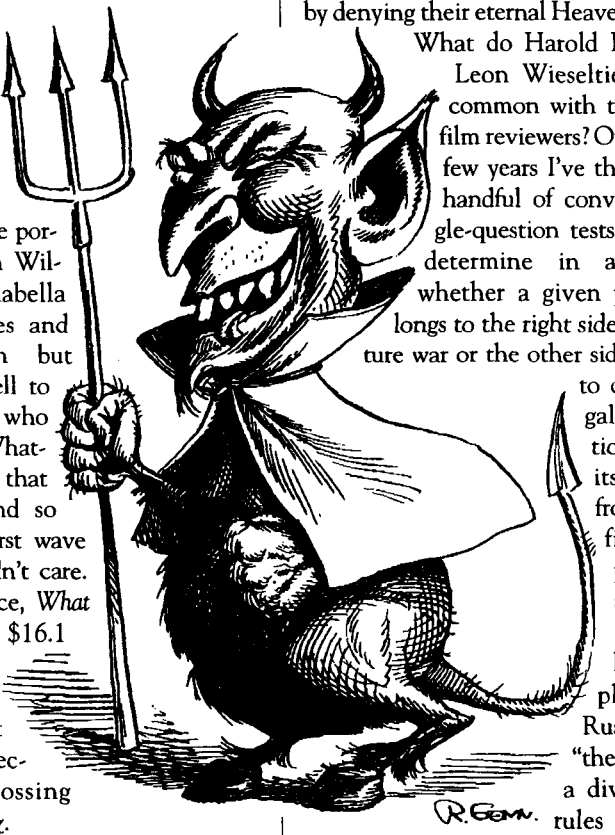
The randomness of the universe is a dauntingly abstract notion. So as a culture we argue about it in disguised, concrete forms, like Hell.

■

Upper West Siders are not supposed to believe in Hell, and probably aren't supposed to flock to movies that posit its existence, either. Some fresh frontier in the culture war was being inaugurated there at the Sony Lincoln Square. After all, lots of pictures get bad reviews. Few get panned across the board. Of those, still fewer belong to the category of the huge-budget, huge-star production. (*What Dreams* cost $85 million, and it shows.) When a movie like that gets trashed all around, something's up.

What Dreams is admittedly a little slow, but it is gripping in its vision of the afterlife. We learn that many of the wicked can expect to be planted in a vast plain of muck from which their heads will stick out, cheek to cheek, like a writhing pumpkin patch. A suicide is damned to spend eternity alone in a ruin of her earthly home, wondering why there is no water pressure in the bathroom shower. The latter is a punishment worthy of Dante for a sin that right-thinking people nowadays are supposed to regard as a matter of personal choice, like ordering decaffeinated espresso.

Of all the sneering reviews *What Dreams* earned itself, the sneeringest was *Newsweek*'s, which concludes: "The climax is Hieronymus Bosch's idea of hell. The rest of the movie may be yours." Notice the way Hell is spelled with a lower-case "h," as if it weren't a real place, like New Jersey. The critics say they object not to the depiction of "hell" but mainly to the excessively sweet love between the couple portrayed by Robin Williams and Annabella Sciorra. He dies and merits Heaven but plunges into Hell to rescue his wife, who killed herself. Whatever it really was that the critics found so offensive, the first wave of audiences didn't care. At the box office, *What Dreams* earned $16.1 million in its opening weekend, making it the country's second-highest-grossing movie, after *Antz*.



As it happened, that weekend in early October seemed specially designed for pondering the afterlife. Sunday morning the *New York Times Book Review* ran a glowing appraisal, by Yale's Harold Bloom, of *Kaddish*, by *New Republic* literary editor Leon Wieseltier. Mr. Wieseltier's father died in 1996, and for the year afterward the son said Kaddish, the prayer recited by Jews for their dead parents. This learned and illuminating book is a journal of the year Mr. Wieseltier mourned for his father in the Orthodox way.

The strange thing, unnoted by Professor Bloom, is that Mr. Wieseltier repeatedly goes out of his way to disavow the millennia-old Jewish faith in an afterlife. "The dead are dead. They will not wake," he insists. Yet this same man went to all the trouble of undertaking the recital—at three daily services, always with a synagogue quorum—of a prayer long understood as benefiting the dead in their next existence. In the cultural matrix occupied by Harold Bloom, disbelief in life after the grave is so taken for granted that an irony like that isn't worth mentioning.

For his part, Mr. Wieseltier praises traditional Jewish practice. But the reflexes of an urban sophisticate make it hard for him to endorse acts of traditional piety without then reducing them to sentimental gestures by denying their eternal Heavenly reward.

What do Harold Bloom and Leon Wieseltier have in common with the nation's film reviewers? Over the past few years I've thought up a handful of convenient single-question tests to let you determine in an instant whether a given person belongs to the right side of the culture war or the other side. One has to do with legalized abortion; it takes its premise from the very first principle of conservatism, as crystallized by the philosopher Russell Kirk: "the belief that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience." More plainly than any other issue of public policy, abortion asks us to consider whether men define right and wrong or God does.

Here's another quick and handy test: "Do you believe in Hell?"

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Consider the roots of the concept in Western religious tradition. The Hebrew Bible doesn't teach about Hell in explicit detail. But as Raymond Chandler wrote, "There are things that are facts, in a statistical sense, on paper, on a tape recorder, in evidence. And there are things that are facts because they have to be facts, because nothing makes any sense otherwise." Hell is the sort of fact that forces itself on you for lack of an alternative. Early on, the Bible promises reward for goodness and punishment for evil (Deuteronomy 11:13–21). Yet the prophets, above all, persistently lament that in this world the evil prosper (Jeremiah 12:1, Habakkuk 1:2–4). Put the two observations together and you see that some punishment must occur in a world other than our own. Otherwise the belief that a just God administers all of existence becomes unsustainable.

For certain people who reject the idea of Hell, that's exactly the point. The deepest question at stake in the culture war is not abortion or Hell, nor evolutionism or homosexuality, but rather this: Does the universe operate on the principle of randomness, or under the rule of transcendent Providence? Only in a random universe can the wicked get away with their wickedness. But the randomness of the universe is a dauntingly abstract notion. So as a culture we argue about it in disguised, concrete forms, like Hell.

Here is how that argument stands at the moment. Most Americans say they believe in Hell: 60 per cent, according to a 1990 Gallup poll. But that figure may be softer than it looks, a theoretical assent without conviction. For 78 per cent of us say we also believe in Heaven, and among that believing majority evidence suggests that happy, cloudy visions of a beatific hereafter for all humanity crowd out visions of Hell. That's why the publishing industry can be assured of a profit when it feeds us one book after the other about near-death experiences, all teeming with colorful pictures of Heaven and none of the Other Place. In her dissenting book *Beyond the Light* (1994), Phyllis Atwater points out that plenty of folks who came close to death have reported being greeted at the gates of Hades by "skulls" and "zombie-like people." But those reports don't get written up in best-sellers.

No wonder. In general, Christians learn about the afterlife in church, if at all. And in that setting, especially among mainline Protestants, Hell has been out for a century. A 1991 cover story on the subject in *U.S. News & World Report* included a telling comment from the Rev. Mary Kraus of Dumbarton United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.: "My congregation would be stunned to hear a sermon on hell," for these "upper-middle-class, well-educated critical thinkers" think of God as "compassionate and loving, not someone who's going to push them into eternal damnation." Note the emphasis on social class: disbelief in Hell as a marker of upward mobility. The same article quoted well-heeled Christian and Jewish theologians to the effect that Hell happens to the wicked not after death but here on earth—maybe when the air-conditioner breaks down in your Palm Beach vacation home.

The good news, culturally speaking, is that if we're going to Hell in a Saks shopping bag, at least we are going there slowly. Belief in Hell is actually up a bit in recent years: from 53 per cent in 1981 and 58 in 1952. The modest success of *What Dreams May Come* might just be a tentative message to the "critical thinkers" from the rest of us, a still small voice whispering: Go to Hell. **NR**

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Control Freaks

To avoid a global depression, the first priority should be to keep the U.S. economy growing—which means keeping it out of the hands of politicians.

LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY

WHAT historians will come to call "The Clinton Bubble" has now clearly burst. The proof is that politicians have changed their tune. Long content to claim the credit for the good times as the bubble expanded, they are now rushing to reassert political controls over the financial markets to make sure that this "never happens again."

Consider President Clinton. Last November, when some minor corrective actions could have headed off the worst damage, the President assured the leaders assembled at the Asia–Pacific economic summit that this was just a "glitch in the road." No need to cast doubt on the country's economic performance, which even then was becoming his sole claim to legitimacy. Now the President is flailing around trying to appear relevant and calling this the "greatest financial crisis in fifty years." He is trying to lead by press release, one week announcing a "coordinated interest rate cut," which had to be disavowed by Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin the next day; another week announcing that the two-day 20 per cent decline in the dollar was "good for America." Again, Rubin had to rush to the rescue.

CONTROLLING AUTHORITY

Maybe we should be grateful that Clinton is still at a loss. Most of the world is not so lucky. In Malaysia, Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad has instituted the financial equivalent of a siege economy with severe restrictions on currency movements. The ex-Communists now regaining power in Russia are contemplating similar controls. Even the traditionally free-market Hong Kong Monetary Authority opted to buy up a major share in the local stock market in the name of combatting the activities of currency speculators. And the newly elected socialist government in Germany is talking about bringing back fixed exchange rates as a way of limiting the effects of international capital flows.

All these ideas will, to varying degrees, make the people of the countries that institute them both poorer and less free. Even at their best, these plans involve a transfer of power from citizens to the state. Hong Kong's stock buy-up transferred resources from the public to the companies that make up the Hangseng Index, which the monetary authority chose as its target. The many small businesses of Hong Kong are effectively subsidizing their much larger competitors. The inevitable favoritism toward the well-connected is even greater in countries like Russia and Malaysia, where cronyism is far better established. This emphasis on politics over economics also means a less efficient and productive allocation of resources, thus making these countries poorer.

FOCUS LIKE A LASER

As bad as the situation in these countries is, American conservatives are well advised to focus their attention closer to home. First, there is the obvious point that we can have more effect here. This is especially true given the disastrous outcome of the advice given to the Third World by the U.S. Treasury and the International Monetary Fund. In Asia, a visit by either Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers or IMF head Michel Camdessus became the kiss of death for incumbent governments. Further advice would be skeptically received, to put it mildly.

Second, politically inspired trends toward "fixes" of our capital markets here at home will do far more damage both to our own economy and to the global economy than the cumulative actions of twenty developing countries. Our capital markets are larger than those of Latin America and Asia combined—including Japan. The economy of South Korea is smaller than that of Los Angeles, while the economy of Malaysia is smaller than that of Connecticut. If we can keep our capital markets both intact and free of politically motivated "good intentions," the world economy will soon resume its upward trajectory. If not, we can look forward to a protracted global downturn.

Third, unlike in the United States, there is a case for some well-designed controls in developing countries. Chile, for example, requires that 30 per cent of all large capital inflows be left on deposit interest free at the Central Bank for one year. That's

Mr. Lindsey, a former governor of the Federal Reserve, is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He is the author of *Economic Puppet Masters: Lessons from the Halls of Power*, forthcoming from AEI Press.

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by Charlie Allen

First iron with wood's face sets World Distance Record; hits 3 times straighter than a 3-iron.

Outdistances a leading, oversize driver by 5 yards.

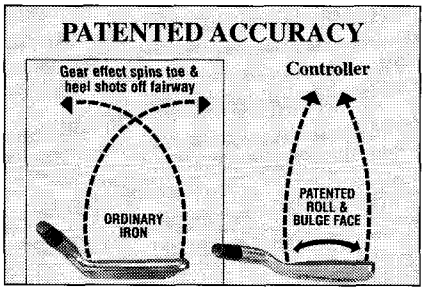
Patented roll and bulge face reduces hooks and slices.

YALESVILLE, CT– Maybe you've seen it on TV. It's the first golf club in history to combine the power of a driver with the accuracy of an iron, and the result is *more* power than a driver and *more* accuracy than an iron.

An independent test on a hitting machine showed that the club, called the Controller® driving iron, outhit one of the top drivers on the Tour by five yards.

Another independent test proved that a typical 85-golfer will hit *three times more accurately* with the Controller than with his 3-iron. It also showed that the higher a golfer's handicap, the straighter and farther he would hit with the Controller.

More proof of the club's performance is the World Record shot hit from the fairway by a PGA professional at Barton Creek golf course outside Austin. Using the Controller, he hit a ball so straight it almost bumped into a marker the size of a newspaper *335 yards away*. A club official measured the shot at 339 yards.



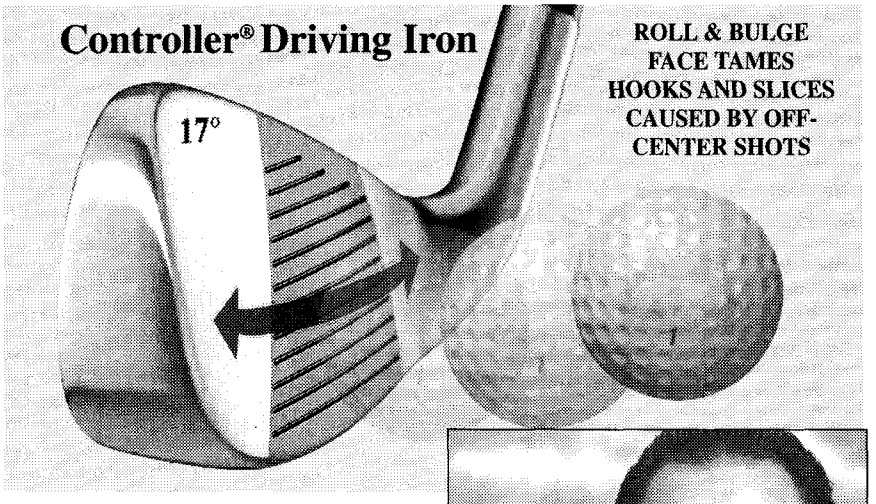
NGC Golf's Controller driving iron is the first iron to use roll and bulge. The design is patented and conforms to U.S.G.A. Rules.

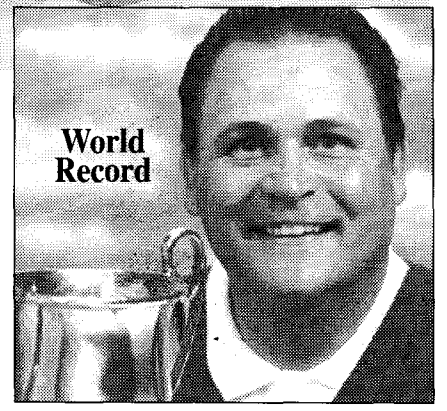
I spoke to one of the Directors of NGC Golf, the club's developer. "This is quite a story. What's making all these good things happen?"

"The club outhits a wood because its head is smaller and 15% heavier. This unique combination gives the club faster clubhead speed and far more clout at impact. It's more accurate than a wood because it is shorter and easier to control."

"Why is it more accurate than an iron?"

"Ah, here's the genius. We took the curve that every wood has on its face– called roll and bulge– and put it on an iron. We are the first company to ever do this and the Controller's design is patented.





Doug Reed, PGA professional and host of the TV show, BETTER GOLF, set a World Record with a 339-yard drive off the grass using a Controller fairway driving iron at Barton Creek Lakeside golf course outside Austin, TX. The shot was hit on a windless day over flat ground and certified by a club official.

"Roll and bulge reduces hooks and slices caused by off-center shots. Here's how it works. The force of a toe shot *opens* the clubface and starts the ball off to the right, then what's called the gear effect takes over and hooks it sharply to the left. The opposite occurs with a heel shot. The gear effect slices it to the right. Roll and bulge *tames* the gear effect and keeps the ball on the fairway. So why do woods hook and slice so badly? Because their shafts have gotten too long and their heads too big for the roll and bulge to work.

"So we put roll and bulge where it works best– on a shorter shaft and a smaller head– and the result is a club *three times more accurate than a 3-iron* and far easier to control than a fairway wood."

I'll vouch for that. The club hits like a machine from normal lies, and because it has a wider sole than a regular iron, and a curved forward lip, it gets the ball up much better than a fairway wood or long iron from tight and buried lies, fairway bunkers and light rough.

Statistics show the top ten money-winners on the Tour miss the fairway with their driver 25% of the time.

It also works from the tee. Drivers are chancy even for pros. Statistics show the top ten money-winners miss the fairway 25% of the time. That statistic should come down, considering the number of pros who now play the Controller.

The company guarantees an 85+ golfer a refund, if he doesn't cut 6 to 8 strokes with the Controller, and lets buyers use it risk-free for 90 days if they order direct. It will also include the two free premiums it offers in its TV advertising: a pair of Condor golf-specific sunglasses and an on-the-course instructional booklet called Pocket Pro. Their combined value is $45.00.

The Controller Fairway driving iron (17° loft) and the Controller Tee Shot driving iron (12.5° loft) cost only $89.00 each with a steel shaft ($159.00 for both), $119.00 each with a graphite shaft ($219.00 for both)... and $135.00 each for the big-butt TurboTip graphite shaft ($239.00 for both). There is a $12.95 shipping and handling charge. Specify one or both clubs, right or left-handed, men's or ladies, regular or stiff flex. CT and NY residents must add sales tax.

To order call **1-800-285-3900** any time or day or fax 1-203-284-1623 or send your name, address and a check (or cc number and exp. date) to NGC Golf **(Dept. DS-695)**, 60 Church St., Yalesville, CT 06492. The Controller conforms to U.S.G. A. Rules.

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roughly like a one-time tax of 3 per cent on incoming capital investment. In the case of a long-term, high-yield investment, the effective tax rate is negligible. But short-term "hot money" inflows face a much higher effective burden.

There is some sense to this. The problem is that even a tiny amount of capital inflow could be very disruptive. If, for example, American households decided to put one-half of 1 per cent of their net wealth in the "Chile Fund," they could come close to buying up the entire capital stock of the country. Given the tendency during this bubble for people to invest in mutual funds focused on countries they couldn't even find on a globe, the fear of short-term capital flows is quite real.

But the main reason America itself should be the top worry has to do with timing. If stock prices fall and unemployment rises, the

If stock prices fall and unemployment rises, the temptation for politicians to find scapegoats will prove irresistible.

temptation for politicians to find scapegoats will prove irresistible. Congressional hearings in which hedge-fund directors, mutual-fund managers, and bank presidents are called to explain why they sold when they did are a virtual certainty. More important, the people who can expect to be called *know* it's a certainty and are starting to act accordingly. This is likely to make the downturn worse by imposing a credit crunch on any borrower who is in the least bit risky.

It makes for an awful dynamic. *Congressman, accusingly: Why did you put so much money in a high risk place? Fund manager, defensively: At the first sign of trouble we cut our exposure there by 90 per cent.* Starved for capital, the economy, firm, or industry in question will shrink further, causing more investor losses and more economic damage. Human beings under assault from the political process quickly adopt a very defensive posture. And they do so at precisely the time when their capital and willingness to take risks is needed the most.

That is why the time for politicians to question economic bubbles is when they are getting bigger, not after they have burst. Markets are self-regulating only because some brave investors are prepared to bet against the market trend. That means that they are prepared to sell when the crowd is sending asset prices to ever more absurd levels. It also means that they are prepared to buy when everyone else thinks the world is ending.

Indeed, the contrarians who had the courage, wisdom, and foresight to sell at the market top, thus bursting the bubble, are the most likely targets of political witch-hunts. These very same contrarians are the ones we need to get us out of a downward spiral. But already these people are finding their lines of credit drying up because of their political untouchability.

The pernicious effect of the political process is also amplified when the market is on the way up. There are many things the government could have done as the bubble grew to mitigate its effects. But taking away the punch bowl as the party really gets going is a terribly unpopular thing to do. Just consider recent history.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan cautioned against "irrational exuberance" in the markets back in December 1996. He did so again a few weeks later. On cue, politicians in both parties insisted that there was no reason for the Chairman to raise interest rates. The criticism got even more intense after the Fed raised rates a mere quarter of a percentage point in March 1997. Politicians claimed that unless inflation proved a threat, there were no "excesses" to worry about [for a different take on interest rates, see Tom Bethell's "Fed Up," page 46]. Besides, their constituents had gotten used to making consistent 20 per cent returns on their stock portfolios, and the resulting capital-gains-tax revenues were creating a balanced budget for which everyone could claim credit. Many of these same politicians will be competing to play the lead role of Cotton Mather in next year's witch-hunts.

Most regulators were not as brave as Greenspan. For example, it is a well-established responsibility of providers of investment vehicles to check out the "suitability" of the investment for a particular client. How many brokers do you know who asked their new clients if they had a savings account for emergencies before they took the plunge in the market? How many of those who pushed "global diversification" on clients first asked whether they knew what continent Thailand was on, or conducted any other test of suitability?

Now the brokers will argue that if they asked such questions, it wouldn't do any good because the unsophisticated would simply go to their competitor. That's where the moral leadership of Bill Clinton or Bob Rubin, or the enforcement power of the Securities and Exchange Commission, might have proved useful. Did any of these politicians give a speech at any of the securities-industry meetings they addressed reminding the audience of their responsibilities?

NOW THEY TELL US

Aside from Alan Greenspan, did any of our nation's leaders who are supposedly responsible for the long-term health of the economy ever utter a cautionary word about the excesses in the market? By contrast, how many times did we hear about the great "Clinton economy" and the new economic era that we were entering? Boosterism is a natural role for politicians, particularly during election season. But the Clintonian development of the permanent campaign, running not just during the entire four years of the first term but even after Mr. Clinton was no longer eligible for re-election, has destroyed the President's traditional role as visionary and opinion leader.

Now it is too late for caution. But we must not let those who spiked the punchbowl and claimed the credit for a great party force their own pet prescriptions on us when we wake up suffering from a hangover. The quickest path to financial and economic recovery after we hit bottom is for contrarians to be able to mobilize funds rapidly.

During the Great Depression, John Maynard Keynes called upon the politicians to use the power of the government to act as contrarian. But the lessons of the twentieth century show why Keynes failed. Far from being contrarians, most politicians want to be seen as leading the parade. Thus they act to make a good thing better, and when markets slip they find ways to limit the economic freedom of others, thus inhibiting the natural recovery. The role for American conservatives in the next few years is to make sure this destructive impulse does not come to dominate policy-setting here at home. If we succeed, our example will be a beacon to others seeking a way out of the abyss. **NR**

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■ COVER STORY ■

Imperial Rule

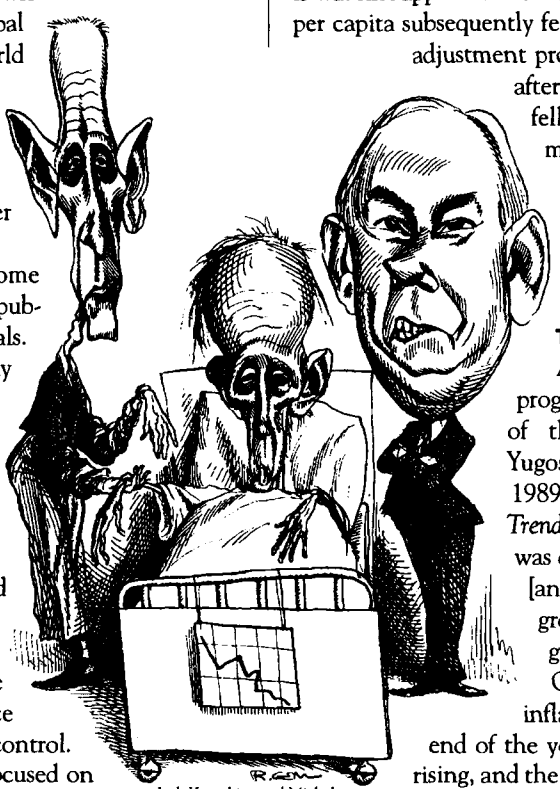
Distant and out of touch, the IMF ruins economies great and small.

ALAN REYNOLDS

OVER the past two decades, the International Monetary Fund has promised cheap loans to foreign governments in order to bribe them into pursuing suicidal economic policies designed by IMF technocrats, rather than by their own elected representatives. This costly global meddling was supposed to make the world economy a safer, more stable place. Needless to say, it has not. Yet international crises that the IMF neither foresaw nor forestalled have been used to persuade Congress to send the IMF another $18 billion.

Congressional Republicans added some "transparency" conditions: the IMF will publish summaries of some decisions and deals. And there will be a commission to study the IMF. But Congress backed away from trying to impose requirements that borrowing countries reduce trade barriers and end political favoritism in lending, or that they repay loans within 18 months at a relatively high interest rate.

Even these abandoned reforms would have been toothless. The U.S. has 1 vote out of 182 in the IMF. The Treasury Department exerts considerable influence over IMF policy, but that is neither a source of comfort nor something Congress can control. In any case, Congress appears to have focused on two relatively mild criticisms of the fund: moral hazard and lack of transparency.



Jack Kevorkian and Michel Camdessus by Roman Genn

"Moral hazard" means that bailouts of bad loans encourage more bad loans. Proposals to make IMF loans shorter-term and more expensive are designed to alleviate it. But if the IMF is to become more cautious and restrictive in its lending, it doesn't need more money: money repaid by one country will become available to loan to another. On the other hand, another $18 billion from the U.S., and $72 billion from other countries, ensure that the outstanding volume of IMF loans will greatly increase—and so will moral hazard.

The transparency problem is that the IMF never reveals the strings it attaches to loans. Congress supposes that if the IMF published sanitized reports on what it had been doing three months earlier, this would somehow improve the quality of the demands it places on its wards. This notion is remarkably innocent. The IMF has 2,300 experts who can rationalize any sort of mischief, and in ways that would make Alan Greenspan's remarks appear simple and clear by comparison.

A far more serious problem is the IMF's long history of doing much harm and no good. (For more details see my lengthy study, "The IMF's Destructive Recipe: Rising Tax Rates and Falling Currencies," in *Money and the Nation State*, edited by Kevin Dowd and Richard Timberlake and published by Independent Institute.) The IMF nearly always requires countries to devalue their currencies or raise tax rates or both. The IMF has also favored wage controls, and at least condoned higher tariffs. This sort of IMF formula was first applied to Peru and Jamaica in 1978, where real income per capita subsequently fell by 13 to 14 per cent. The next such adjustment programs were in Nicaragua and Bolivia after 1980, where real output subsequently fell by 13 and 28 per cent respectively. A more recent example was Haiti, where a 1990 IMF program (described by the World Bank as an effort "to increase fiscal revenues") was followed by a prolonged 24 per cent drop in GDP.

THE CASUALTY LIST

Any list of countries "helped" by IMF programs reads like a casualty list. The start of the IMF's painful involvement in Yugoslavia was candidly described in the 1989 issue of the World Bank's publication, *Trends in Developing Countries*: "The dinar was devalued in real terms by 19.3 per cent [and] strict limits were imposed on the growth of nominal wages. . . . The program was supported by the IMF. . . . Output declined about 2 per cent, and inflation accelerated to 251 per cent by the end of the year. The unemployment rate has been rising, and the real income of the population declined by at least 2 per cent."

The same sort of destabilization program was pawned off on several Latin American countries. To obtain a two-year IMF loan in 1982–83, for example, Chile deeply devalued the peso, raised tariffs from 10 per cent to 35 per cent, and raised income-tax rates. The economy collapsed, and inflation soared. Chile completely reversed those policies in 1984–85, and later ended an onerous payroll tax by privatizing Social Security. Since escaping the clutches of the IMF, Chile has become a model for development.

The IMF's track record in East Asia is no better. South Korea adopted an IMF program in 1980, including a 17 per cent devaluation and a huge increase in the highest income-tax rates. The economy shrank by 5 per cent, and inflation hit 35 per cent. As soon as the term of the IMF loan ended in February 1981, the Korean government began to slash tariffs and tax rates. This was followed by nearly two decades of astonishing economic growth, an achievement tarnished but not undone by Korea's latest disastrous experiment with currency devaluation.

Mr. Reynolds is Director of Economic Research at the Hudson Institute, and senior editor of *American Outlook*. Portions of this essay were adapted from his talk at the Cato Institute's annual monetary conference, October 22.

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The Philippines went through a similar experience in the Eighties: devaluation, higher taxes, inflation, and shrinking GDP under IMF tutelage, followed by revolution, a reversal of IMF policies, and 5 to 6 per cent economic growth. In 1990–91, however, a new IMF "stabilization program" entailed another devaluation, a new 10 per cent VAT, and an extra 9 per cent import tariff. Economic growth in 1991–92 was below zero, and inflation rose from below 4 to nearly 19 per cent.

The IMF's role in promoting higher tariffs is rarely so direct, and yet tariffs tend to follow from its obsession with budget and trade deficits. A tariff seems to attack the alleged "twin deficits" at both ends, cutting both imports and the budget deficit; hence tariffs are often condoned if not actively promoted.

The so-called Asian "contagion" is largely a matter of IMF design, not some inexplicable accident.

At times, the IMF missionaries appear to act as if all countries should run trade surpluses, although this does not add up. They also seem to believe that all countries can become more "competitive" by repeatedly devaluing their currencies against one another, also arithmetically impossible. Thus, the IMF teams have been telling each of the wounded Asian tigers to slash imports and expand exports. But most Asian trade takes place within the region. That means one country's reduced imports must be a neighboring country's reduced exports. The so-called Asian "contagion" is largely a matter of IMF design, not some inexplicable accident.

TWIN PEAKS

Why does the IMF focus so single-mindedly on the trade or "current account" deficit? Because slashing imports and redirecting production away from domestic uses into exports is supposed to free up more cash with which poor countries can pay interest to the multinational banks, including the IMF. The IMF's infamous obsession with squeezing more tax revenue out of troubled economies actually follows from its mercantilist habit of treating imports as evil. That is because the Fund has another strange theory, that of "twin deficits."

Illustrious proponents of the twin-deficits theory confidently predicted, a few years ago, that any budget surplus in the United States would be matched by a trade surplus. Wrong. According to the twin-deficits theory, today's huge budget deficit in Japan would be matched by an equally huge Japanese trade deficit. Wrong again. Yet in *The Economist* of October 3, the IMF's chief economist, Stanley Fischer, was still recycling this twin-deficit theory to excuse the lunacy of trying to force collapsing economies into a big budget surplus. In late 1997, this weird twin-deficits theorizing fostered a higher VAT or higher oil taxes in some Asian countries, and higher tariffs in at least two. Bad ideas produce bad policies.

Is it too much to ask for a single IMF success story? Jeff Sachs of MIT once cited Turkey as the only IMF success he could find. Others have suggested the Ivory Coast or Peru. But whatever success those countries had was the result of pursuing policies the opposite of those the IMF invariably demands. In 1992–93, Peru cut the top tax from 50 per cent to 30 per cent, eliminated excise taxes, and slashed tariffs. That was no IMF program. As for the Ivory Coast, real GDP fell for six years in a row after the country adopted an IMF program in 1986.

Other distressed countries have succeeded without the IMF's "help." For example, in 1985 Singapore ended a serious recession by, among other things, slashing the top income-tax rate from 45 per cent to 30 per cent. Its economy has grown by nearly 8 per cent a year ever since. Bolivia and Mauritius ended hyperinflations via tax cuts in the Eighties. What all such miraculous turnarounds have in common is some combination of lower tax rates and tariffs and an institutional device to make currency devaluation unlikely.

If the IMF can really be reformed, the effort needs to begin with a clear statement of what it is expected to do. It is not and cannot be a "lender of last resort" in any meaningful sense. About all it can do is shift debt risk from frivolous lenders to innocent taxpayers. Besides, the most troubled countries have more than enough debt, much of it to the IMF. At most, the IMF should provide short-term loans to cover liquidity crunches for a few weeks, not bailouts for insolvent banks and firms that continue for years. And the IMF should use insurance techniques to set rates higher for risky countries and frequent borrowers.

The politics of this issue are tainted by the huge amount of money involved. American industrial and farm lobbies imagine that more IMF loans would translate into greater exports to the borrowers, even though slashing those countries' imports is the IMF's main goal. Multinational banks dream that more IMF loans will make it unnecessary to lose money on foreign loans that went sour, even though conditions attached to IMF loans often ruin the countries' creditworthiness. Meanwhile, the hotter the global financial fires, the more likely it is that the IMF will reach for the gasoline pump instead of water. **NR**

■ COVER STORY ■

Fed Up

The Federal Reserve was listening to the wrong warning signals.

TOM BETHELL

WE are in a world very different from that of 1971, when President Nixon "closed the gold window." That action allowed dollars to be "printed" without loss of America's gold. Inflation came roaring in, interest rates soared, and the price of gold rose to $850 an ounce. Ever since the great inflation was unleashed, officials have shown their civic responsibility by fighting the last war. They keep on trying to stamp out the last trace of

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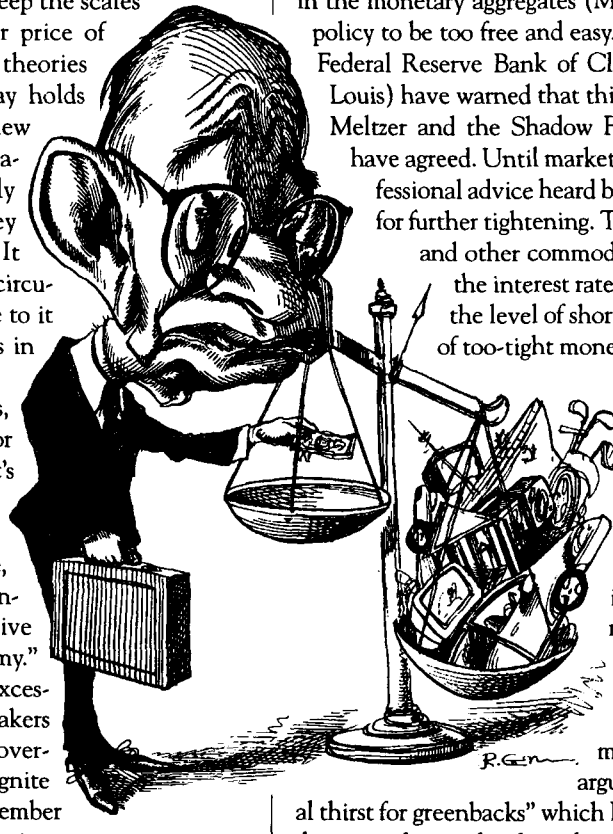
inflation—even after it has disappeared, and after economic contraction looms. Some lessons were indelibly learned. We know now that governments can't just "print money." (In the late 1960s some thought otherwise.)

Broadly speaking, then, monetarism triumphed. The quantity of money pumped out by central banks is indeed directly linked to the value of a currency. But still, if you examine what has gone on in recent months, it is clear that the question, "What should the appropriate 'money supply' be in order to maintain a stable currency?" is still only dimly understood by some of the people whose job it is to get the answer right. People at the Federal Reserve Bank, for example.

OUT OF BALANCE

A pair of scales helps us to think about a stable currency. Goods go on one side of the scales, money on the other. The growth of money should keep pace with the production of new goods. If the supply of new goods keeps growing apace, because people are working hard and with greater efficiency, more must be added to the "money" side in order to keep the scales in balance; that is, to keep the dollar price of goods from falling. Yet, one of the two theories dominant at the Federal Reserve today holds the opposite view: that if people make new goods too quickly, that in itself is inflationary! If things are piling up too rapidly on the "goods" side of the scales, money must be *withdrawn* from the other side. It is the most dangerous economic idea in circulation today. The Fed's recent adherence to it precipitated the worldwide market crisis in August.



It is standard fare among economists, and journalists use it without hesitation or explanation. Here is the *Washington Post*'s John M. Berry on September 30, the day after the Fed reduced a key interest rate by a quarter-point. The move, he wrote, was intended "to calm jittery world financial markets without giving an excessive boost to a currently strong U.S. economy." How can a "boost" to any economy be "excessive"? Berry also referred to Fed policymakers who worry that the U.S. economy may "overheat." A larger interest-rate cut might "ignite inflation." *The Economist* in early September decried "loud calls for America to cut interest rates," and argued that *higher* rates were needed to "cool the excessive rates of growth." (More recently, in Europe, there have been loud cries for interest rates cuts.) If not pricked, the "financial bubble in America" would burst of its own accord, exploding "into future inflation."

At a touch of the ignition, then, overheating spirals will inflate a bubble. The burst bubble will cause prices to rise. Dangerous! This mixture of bubbles and spirals and overheating do suggest a confused underlying theory—and that is what we have. It is sometimes known as the Phillips Curve, and it is espoused by President Clinton's Fed appointees. The idea is that with unemployment low, wages will creep upward, and these rising costs will cause higher prices, which in turn will push wages up more . . . Thus, the inflationary spiral. But it can arise only if it is accommodated by an increase in the money supply, absent which, the rise of some prices must be offset by a reduction in others. Which brings us to the monetarists.

Much of the professional advice given to Fed chief Alan Greenspan has been in the direction of further tightening.

What made the recent situation dangerous is that in the Fed today, the monetarist faction also has believed that monetary policy needed to be tightened. This faction is convinced that growth in the monetary aggregates (M1, M2, etc.) has shown monetary policy to be too free and easy. Jerry Jordan, the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, and William Poole (St. Louis) have warned that this is a harbinger of inflation. Allan Meltzer and the Shadow Federal Open Market Committee have agreed. Until markets tumbled, then, much of the professional advice heard by Fed chief Alan Greenspan called for further tightening. This persisted even as the gold price and other commodity prices were sinking lower, and the interest rates on long bonds were falling below the level of short-term bonds—a reliable indicator of too-tight money.

Bruce Bartlett, a Reagan and Bush Treasury official, points to what may well be the problem. "Global financial turmoil and the growth of underground economies have greatly increased the demand for dollars in foreign countries," he wrote recently. Now, "more than half of all the U.S. currency in circulation is outside the U.S." Lawrence Kudlow, chief economist of American Skandia, also argues that the real problem is a "global thirst for greenbacks" which Fed officials and economists either do not understand or have been unwilling to accommodate. The Fed is "conducting the wrong debate," according to former assistant Treasury secretary Paul Craig Roberts. The real issue is whether "the flat yield curve"—when long-term interest rates are below short-term ones—"is a sign the Fed is deflating the world economy."

Surely that is what has been happening. Gold has been driven out officially, but a unit of monetary measure and a store of value is

Mr. Bethell is Washington correspondent for *The American Spectator*, and the author of the recently published The Noblest Triumph (Free Press).

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still needed, and that is increasingly provided by the dollar. Investment advisor John Mueller points out that foreign central banks hang on to their trade-surplus dollars and use them as monetary reserves to back up their own currencies. In the scales metaphor, the dollar is now expected to "balance" a much larger basket of goods, a worldwide basket, and therefore the dollars that have been added to the aggregates may well still not be enough. This implies that the U.S. monetary authorities have been the primary cause of the recent chaos in emerging markets. It would also explain why these troubles became apparent in so many places in the same fairly brief time interval—the period when the falling gold price (which retains its all-important signaling power) was sending a message of economic contraction.

GIVE US DOLLARS

Some market evidence strongly suggests that these worldwide problems can be traced back to an insufficiency of dollars. On September 17, when Greenspan denied rumors of a global interest-rate cut, U.S. markets didn't mind—they actually went up a bit. But the next day markets around the world tumbled, with declines of 2.4 per cent in Japan, 3.9 per cent in Germany, 5.5 per cent in France. Wall Street then followed suit, falling 216 points. Other currencies are tethered to the dollar, and as the Fed kept pulling in the reins, showing that the problem was still not understood by the powers-that-be, markets worldwide became nervous. The same thing happened again on September 30. After Greenspan announced his small, quarter-percent rate cut, Wall Street didn't do much. But European markets again fell sharply the next day. And again, Wall Street then followed suit.

One other signal has strongly suggested that the monetarists have erred in thinking that their aggregates signal inflation. When the interest-rate reduction was announced, long bond prices immediately rose sharply (that is, long-term interest rates fell), and continued to do so the next day. If markets think a move will have an inflationary impact, long bond prices will certainly tank.

Finally, there is some good news. At the end of his *General Theory*, Keynes has an amusing and oft-quoted passage about the ideas of economists and philosophers being more powerful than is commonly understood, the world being ruled "by little else"; about the influence of defunct economists; and about madmen in authority, "distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back." This is all still true, but much less so than formerly. At the time of the Depression, officeholders in Washington barely knew what was going on, and they were indeed dependent on academic scribblers (Keynes among them).

Within the precincts of the Federal Reserve building on Constitution Avenue, the murmurings of defunct economists are still heard all day long, but they are muffled indeed compared to the great clanging of alarm bells from markets worldwide. They are loud and clear now, and the chairman of the Federal Reserve would have to be stubborn indeed to ignore them. (To the extent that the Fed *cannot* ignore them. To his credit, Greenspan did not.) The Fed has lost power. It cannot do much more or much less than the markets cry out for. And for that, we should all be grateful. **NR**

■ CHECKING THE FACTS ■

The New Myths

The common wisdom usually isn't wisdom at all.

RAMESH PONNURU

A YEAR ago, Congress got worked up about HMOs that forbade doctors to tell patients about some of their treatment options. So it banned the practice. The problem: as the General Accounting Office told Congress a year later, these "gag rules" never existed in the first place.

When we make bad decisions, it's often not because of what we don't know but because of what we do know that isn't so. And reporters, politicians, and policymakers know all sorts of things that aren't so. That's one reason they have periodic fits of hysteria over the *crise du jour* (before "gag rules" there was "corporate downsizing").

We are in the midst of a national seminar on the importance of truth in public life. What better time to dispose of some of the persistent myths that impede sound public policy?

1. *"Guns in the home are 43 times more likely to kill a family member or friend than an intruder."* Ellen Goodman wrote that in 1993, but let's not pick on her. This factoid is endlessly repeated by congressmen, by Handgun Control, Inc., by TV crime shows, and even sitcoms. It isn't exactly false, but it's extremely misleading.

The original source is a study of Seattle deaths written up by Dr. Arthur Kellerman for the *New England Journal of Medicine*. It has been fiercely criticized. For one thing, using a gun for defense kills the assailant only 1 or 2 per cent of the time, according to Florida State University criminologist Gary Kleck. What about brandishing it to scare an intruder off, or for that matter wounding the intruder? Neither outcome counted in Kellerman's body count. The vast majority of the tragic deaths, meanwhile, are suicides who may well have killed themselves some other way absent a gun. (Many countries with fewer guns than the U.S. have higher suicide rates.)

2. *The SAT is biased against women and minorities, and it doesn't predict college performance.* This argument has been around for years, but it's getting a vigorous workout now that racial preferences are facing serious challenges. If universities can't have double standards for admissions, the civil-rights lobby is concluding, maybe objective standards should be junked altogether (or at least given less weight). Thus Lani Guinier, as ever on the cutting edge of civil-rights thinking, suggested in a 1997 op-ed that the argument over preferences has "ignored the real problem, which is that we are basing admissions for all students mainly on test scores." The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights is investigating whether such admissions criteria are discriminatory.

Some advocates seem to think that the mere fact that women and minorities tend to get lower scores than white boys proves that the SAT is biased. Beyond that, groups like the National Center for Fair and Open Testing cite examples of culturally

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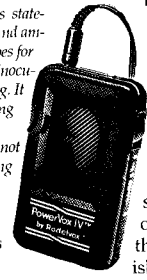

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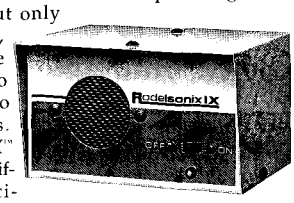

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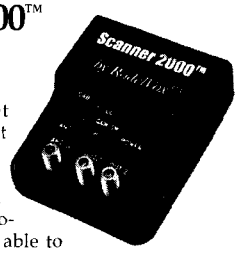

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loaded questions, such as the famous one which involved the word "regatta." But the very fame of this example, which appeared in 1975, suggests that it has few peers. (The College Board, by the way, says blacks didn't do particularly badly on this question.)

The SAT is a pretty good predictor of first-year grades at selective colleges; in fact, minorities' grades tend to be *lower* than predicted. It is not as good at predicting how, say, students at Harvard will stack up against one another, for the same reason that height is not as good a predictor of basketball ability in the NBA as in the population in general: the group has already been sorted. David Murray, author of a defense of standardized testing in the

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There is something to the argument that tests like the SAT chiefly measure the ability to take tests.

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September *Commentary*, concedes that there is something to the argument that tests like the SAT chiefly measure the ability to take tests; but tests of some form or another are, after all, a large part of college.

Lefty education gadfly Peter Sacks said in 1997, "The case against standardized mental testing may be as intellectually and ethically rigorous as any argument made about social policy in the past twenty years." So much the worse for the past twenty years.

3. *"[T]he military depends upon women."* Thus spoke Sen. Olympia Snowe (R., Me.) in June, during the debate over an amendment introduced by Sen. Sam Brownback (R., Kan.) to mandate separate training for men and women. Sen. Snowe was echoing the fact sheet distributed by the army's own Office of Legislative Liaison: "The Army cannot accomplish its mission without women—21 per cent of recruits are women and 60 per cent of all recruits serve in gender-integrated [job categories]." Sure, gender integration causes problems: pregnant sailors; disregard for military rules about sex; the potential for abuse; lowered physical standards and unit cohesion. But there is no alternative. The military just can't get enough men.

This is not true. The services have so many women not because they can't find men but because they maintain "goals"—i.e., quotas—for female recruits. And since women tend to be rather less gung-ho about joining the Armed Forces, recruiting them is much more expensive per person than recruiting men—at least 50 per cent more in the Army, according to testimony for the President's commission on women in the military in the early Nineties. While women have always filled some auxiliary and support roles in the military, the Armed Forces could do without all of them if it had to, says Elaine Donnelly, head of the Center for Military Readiness.

But this myth could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. As Thomas Ricks reported in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1997, Pentagon officials and many Army officers fear that male enlistments are down "because a macho image is being diluted," not least by gender integration: "Overall, the decline of interest is especially precipitous among blacks and Hispanics." The branch of the Armed Forces with the least recruitment difficulties, the Marines, is also the one that has allowed the least cultural change.

4. *High infant-mortality rates and low life expectancies show our health-care system is failing.* We heard a lot of this in 1993–94, when the Clintons were pushing their grand overhaul, but it hasn't gone away.

Actually, it is in part a tribute to American health care that our infant-mortality rate is higher than those of other countries. Doctors here will go to great lengths to try to save babies who would elsewhere be treated as stillborn. That makes our statistics look worse. Another reason for the high infant-mortality rates, as Nicholas Eberstadt of the American Enterprise Institute has explained, is that Americans have a high rate of low-birthweight babies—a result of high rates of teen pregnancy, illegitimacy, and drug abuse. The average life expectancy also reflects American lifestyles: high rates of crime, drug abuse, unsafe sex, and fat consumption take their toll. Neither national health insurance nor, for that matter, medical savings accounts are likely to do much to change this.

5. *The tax code can redistribute income.* Liberals are for redistribution and conservatives against it, but not many people challenge its feasibility. Maybe they should. Everyone who has looked at the issue agrees that America's post-tax distribution of income doesn't look much different from the pre-tax distribution. Alan Reynolds, director of research at the Hudson Institute, thinks redistribution can't work in principle. He argues that progressive tax rates amount to a tax on the returns to education. When you tax something, it becomes more scarce—and the pre-tax market return therefore rises. Thus, he has written, "Taxes that appear to fall on supposedly affluent owners of capital can, in fact, exacerbate inequalities of income by making capital more scarce relative to labor. Capital scarcity *raises* the return to owners of capital but *lowers* real wages, by depressing productivity."

The great counter-example is Japan, where high tax rates at the top coincide with greater income equality than here. But as Reynolds notes, "That's clearly because executives [in Japan] get paid in perks to an extent not seen in other countries."

6. *"[T]hirty per cent of the teenagers who commit suicide in this country are gay."* That's what viewers of *60 Minutes* heard from Lesley Stahl on August 16. In a story on Ellen DeGeneres a year earlier, Diane Sawyer had cited "a government statistic" that gay teens were three times as likely as their straight peers to kill themselves. After that report aired, Delia M. Rios debunked both statistics in the *American Journalism Review*.

She found that the data just aren't there: "A panel convened in 1994—with representatives of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institute of Mental Health, the American Psychological Association, the American Association of Suicidology, and gay and lesbian advocacy and service groups—made this finding: 'There is no population-based evidence that sexual orientation and suicidality are linked in some direct or indirect manner.'" The original source of the myth was a San Francisco social worker's extrapolations from flawed studies; his essay was included in an HHS task-force report, and a "government statistic" was born.

7. *The American people will not tolerate casualties.* This one is practically a truism among the foreign-policy intelligentsia, who have taken it as a constraint since the Vietnam War. The myth was reinforced when America cut and ran after the bombing deaths of 239 soldiers in Lebanon in 1983 and the killing of 18 in

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Somalia in 1993. Fear of the public reaction to substantial American casualties was one of the reasons why President Bush ended the Gulf War when he did. Edward Luttwak even wrote an essay in *Foreign Affairs* explaining decreasing tolerance for casualties as a function of decreasing average family size: mothers have fewer sons to spare these days.

In fact, studies by the Rand Corporation and others suggest that the American public will accept casualties if it perceives them as the unavoidable consequences of an important mission with a clear strategy. It will not accept the wasting of lives on an ill-conceived mission with no end in mind. Support for the interventions in Lebanon and Somalia bottomed out *before* the debacles. As Lt. Col. (ret.) Ralph Peters wrote in *Proceedings*, "the conviction of our governing elite that Americans are unwilling to countenance death for any cause tells us far more about that elite than it does about our citizens in general."

8. *Everybody does it* (i.e., commits adultery or lies about sex). How many times have we heard this in the last eight months from defenders of President Clinton? Katha Pollitt in *The Nation*: "At least the lies he's told about sex are ones we can all identify with." Dick Morris on Fox News (courtesy of Hotline): "[W]hen you get to an issue like adultery, the American people are experts on that issue. There is virtually no American who has not directly or indirectly been scathed by adultery." Kate Moses in *Salon*: "The Clintons, it is clear, are no different from any of the rest of us, except for having chosen to conduct their family life under the intense scrutiny of the American voting public."

Oh really? The best available figures come from the sex survey released by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center in 1994. It reports that just 22 per cent of men and 14 per cent of women commit adultery over the course of their lives. And the typical infidelity is not a serial extravaganza. "They all do it" isn't true of Presidents, either: nobody ever breathed a word against Jimmy Carter or Ronald Reagan.

While most of these myths are the inventions of liberals, they aren't the only myth-makers, of course. People across the political spectrum like to cite an apocryphal survey finding that teachers in 1940 worried most about students talking, chewing gum, and making noise, as opposed to drug abuse, alcohol abuse, and pregnancy these days. (This was debunked by Barry O'Neill, a professor at Yale University, in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1994).

Conservative myths, though, tend to be caught quickly. So, for instance, when Bill Bennett asserted in *The Weekly Standard* that the life expectancy for gay men was 43 years—a point which *NR* praised him for making—he was immediately and vigorously challenged. The figure turned out to be based on a survey of obituaries in gay urban newspapers, hardly a representative sample.

Christina Hoff Sommers, whose *Who Stole Feminism?* debunked bogus feminist statistics, thinks that one reason for this political asymmetry is that "when you're exaggerating victimization people assume your heart's in the right place." Correcting the record, on the other hand, can come across as callous.

But nobody's real interests are served by perpetuating falsehoods. Their consequences are not always predictable: the factoid about gay-teen suicides, for instance, could increase support for "gay rights"—or harden attitudes about gays' proneness to instability. By the same token, dispelling the myths does not settle whether we should have gun control or national health insurance. But at least it allows these issues to be debated intelligently. **NR**

■ **HANDICAPPING 2000** ■

Great Wide Open

Is it George W.'s to lose? Is Forbes viable? Who else is for real?

JOHN J. MILLER & RAMESH PONNURU

REPUBLICAN primaries have resembled coronations for at least a generation: the winning candidate always looked like an heir to the throne. In 1996, Sen. Bob Dole was the GOP's elder statesman; it was his turn. In 1988, Vice President George Bush was the obvious successor to Ronald Reagan. And so on.

That calculus doesn't work nearly so well today. "The contest for the Republican presidential nomination in 2000 is the most open it's been for our party since 1940," says Haley Barbour, former chairman of the Republican National Committee. "There's no true front-runner."

GEORGE W. BUSH

That may come as a surprise to supporters of Texas Gov. George W. Bush (nickname: "Dubya"), who include many in the Republican establishment. Indeed, if Bush captures the nomination, hindsighters won't have a problem fitting his rise into the regular GOP pattern of ascendancy.

Bush has been able to remain above the messy fray of campaign fundraising, apparently content to govern in Austin and let the nomination come to him. That will have to change, of course, but so far he has not demonstrated an unseemly amount of personal ambition. Meanwhile, every faction of the party has been able to project its hopes upon this one-termer's relatively blank slate. A residual fondness for his father only helps. Polls show Dubya would trounce Al Gore if the election were being held this fall. Hispanics appear to like him; his nomination could reverse that bloc's trend toward the Democrats.

Bush's main strength is the weakness of the field, which may explain why Mr. Barbour declines to label him a true front-runner. He is untested. Beating Ann Richards in 1994 was impressive; his record since then has been mixed: he has held spending increases below the state's rate of economic growth, but in 1997 he pushed a risky tax-shifting plan that failed because of opposition from small-business owners, professionals, and tax activists.

On the minus side, Bush himself has hinted that a few skeletons may lurk in his closet—although the fact that he has apparently reformed could change that to a plus. California's decision to move its primary up to March 7 is a big boost to Bush. But he may be the only Republican who would be hurt by an economic downturn in 1999 or 2000. Will America really turn to a Bush to haul it out of recession?

Bottom Line: He has the name and will have the money; the race is his to lose.

STEVE FORBES

Steve Forbes may not be a natural politician, but he clearly got

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the presidential bug in 1996. Since then he has assiduously courted the Right on three parallel tracks. He campaigns by movement-building: helping candidates, running ads to promote tax cuts in Iowa and a ban on partial-birth abortion in New Jersey, and holding congressional Republicans' feet to the fire. He issues position papers on everything under the sun (in a recent one, Forbes "URGES CONGRESS TO REMOVE SENATOR LEVIN'S ANTI-ADOPTION PROVISION FROM OMNIBUS BILL"), which has helped make him the candidate of the conservative think tanks.

Most important, he is mending fences with social conservatives who distrusted him in 1996 because of his ambiguity on abortion and his harebrained attack on the Christian Coalition. When reporters asked Forbes earlier this year which he would choose if he could cut taxes or outlaw abortion, he picked the latter: "The Declaration of Independence says 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' Life comes first." Richard Land, an official of the Southern Baptist Convention, said at the time, "Answers like that build credibility fast."

America has never elected a President who wasn't previously an officeholder or war hero. International economic troubles play to Forbes's strengths—nobody else in the race has a coherent and well-thought-out view of the world economy—but should the situation become a crisis it might highlight his lack of political experience. He is going to get terrible press as the race begins in earnest, but that too should commend him to some conservatives. Finally, he's willing to dip into his family fortune. Forbes is the only candidate who doesn't have to worry about federal matching funds and the spending limits that accompany them.

Bottom Line: Bush is probably right to see Forbes as his main threat.

JOHN ASHCROFT

Religious conservatives haven't fared well on the national stage partly because their favorite candidates have lacked substantial political experience. Pat Robertson was a preacher, not a pol. With the emergence of Sen. John Ashcroft (Mo.), however, the Christian Right may have found what it needs: a veteran officeholder with deep evangelical convictions and a reassuring manner. Many religious-conservative leaders support him strongly, although the grassroots haven't come around yet: Ashcroft remains well back in the polls. There are also real concerns about whether he can raise enough money to compete.

Ashcroft is determined, not inspiring. He physically resembles Douglas MacArthur, but the similarity ends there; Ashcroft could use some of the Old Soldier's spark. Yet in the wake of Bill Clinton the public may want a square. Last January, Ashcroft urged Clinton's resignation ("if these charges are true") while most of his fellow Republicans were busy reviewing poll numbers.

As a senator, Ashcroft has been solid on the issues: he is largely responsible for the defeat of national testing standards, and his new tax plan (featuring a $1.7-trillion tax cut) has earned high marks from supply-siders. Although his eight years as governor of Missouri were unremarkable, he won impressive electoral victories in a state that often leans Democratic.

Bottom Line: He's not running for Veep, but is it too soon to think about a Bush–Ashcroft ticket?

DAN QUAYLE

Of all the possible contenders, Dan Quayle is the one who best fits the description "movement conservative." On morals, economics, and foreign policy, he has almost always been sound—and frequently ahead of the curve. The first bill he introduced in Congress was for term limits, not just for congressmen but also for federal judges. Repealing the marriage penalty became a hot issue this year; Quayle was for it twenty years ago. Quayle has also demonstrated greater seriousness than many of his Republican peers by continuing to pay attention to the world even when the polls said domestic concerns had left no place for foreign ones.

Quayle is smarter than a lot of the people who call him dumb. When he was Vice President his Beltway detractors called his chief of staff, Bill Kristol, "Dan Quayle's brain." But the knack for finding smart and talented people, and the self-confidence to hire them, are commendable traits, and less common in politics than one might think. Anyone who believes Quayle was a drag on the Republican ticket in 1992 should try to imagine what that campaign would have looked like if Bush hadn't had the issues Quayle gave him, such as deregulation and family values.

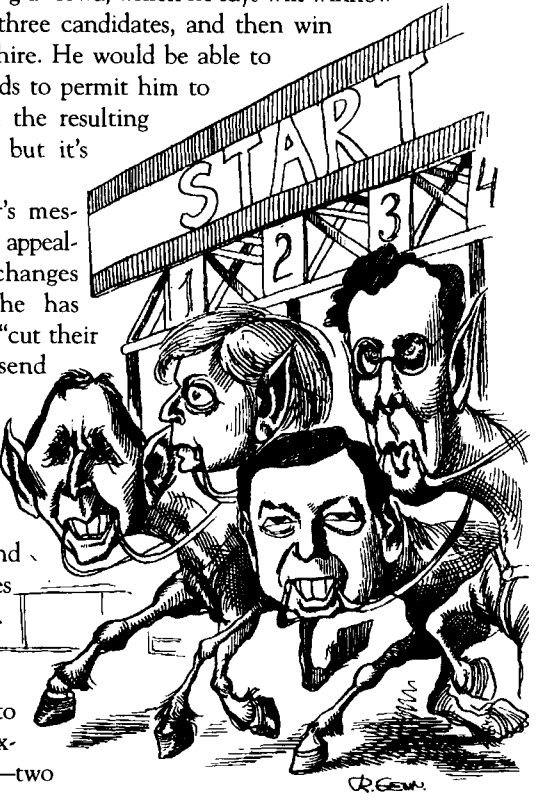
The Jay Leno gibes are unfair, but they've stuck. Quayle is not just a candidate, he's a symbol. He is obsessed by his image problem, but has not yet found a way to surmount it.

Bottom Line: Long odds, but don't underestimate him.

LAMAR ALEXANDER

Lamar Alexander did not win a primary in 1996, but arguably came closer than anyone else to beating Bob Dole: a few more percentage points and Dole would have come in third in New Hampshire, burying his campaign. Once again, Alexander is the candidate positioned to benefit if everyone else collapses—especially Bush, whose implosion would in theory send moderate/establishment support scurrying to Alexander.

It would have to do so quickly, given 2000's compressed primary schedule. Alexander has adopted a two-state strategy: make a strong showing in Iowa, which he says will winnow the field to three candidates, and then win New Hampshire. He would be able to raise the funds to permit him to capitalize on the resulting momentum, but it's still risky.



Alexander's message is always appealing but it changes too often: he has moved from "cut their pay and send them home" to civil society and now to "the war against parents." And all these issues are soft-edged. It might be smarter for Republicans to adopt his tax-reform plan—two

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rates, with generous exemptions for children and breaks for mortgage interest and charitable giving—than Steve Forbes's, but nobody who cares about the issue is going to flock to him. Social conservatives can't figure out his position on abortion and assume the worst.

Bottom Line: The main argument for Alexander is that he's a winner—and last time around, he lost.

PETE WILSON

Like cheap wine, Republicans often get worse with age. California Gov. Pete Wilson is an exception. His first term featured the largest state tax hike in American history. The second-term Wilson, however, allowed the income-tax increase to expire and also made some cuts. Moreover, the governor has shown an uncanny ability to attach himself to winning issues, such as fighting illegal immigration and repealing racial preferences. But his support for abortion rights is enough to prevent him from winning the GOP nomination, and his crusading for them is enough to keep him off the ticket entirely.

Bottom Line: If he helps California go GOP in 2000, can he pick his Cabinet post?

GARY BAUER

Anyone who spends much time around presidential contenders is bound to think he could do a better job of it than they, as Family Research Council president Gary Bauer has apparently concluded. His fundraising has surpassed expectations: he's nearing $6 million from 100,000 donors. The organization he leads gives him a built-in base in every state. If social conservatives are looking for someone who can make their case, Bauer is an articulate and thoughtful candidate.

His politics have been evolving. He increasingly questions free-marketeers' prescriptions on Social Security and taxes; on trade, he has sometimes indulged in a lite version of Buchananism. But unlike Buchanan, he agrees with neoconservatives on the need for an interventionist, pro-democracy foreign policy. If both men run, one subtheme of the race will be which attitude toward the world prevails among religious conservatives. But it's hard to see Bauer being much more acceptable to a majority of the party.

Bottom Line: His main role may be to cripple Ashcroft's candidacy.

PAT BUCHANAN

There isn't a better speaker in the GOP than Pat Buchanan, but primary voters have heard him twice before. Will a fiercely loyal base find the motivation to defy Beltway expectations one more time, only to see their man fade quickly after New Hampshire? Buchanan was so successful at being unsuccessful in 1992 and 1996 that he appears to have generated some competition; Bauer may make a strong bid for the Buchanan Brigades in 2000. Buchanan may not care about cannibalizing the social Right. Perhaps more than any other Republican, he seems to enjoy the raucous give-and-take of campaigning—a grander version of *Crossfire*. He doesn't want to win the nomination so much as shape the debate. A recession would help him do that.

Bottom Line: Gov. Bush should pay his filing fees.

JOHN KASICH

Not since James Garfield has anyone gone from the House to the White House. But Ohio congressman John Kasich is one of the few Republican figures who inspire enthusiasm in some quarters without alienating others. His advisors boast about his intuitive feel for the concerns of Reagan Democrats. Since much of his appeal is based on his youth and energy, perhaps it would be better to describe him as a Kennedy Republican.

He would have to catch fire to win the nomination; no paint-by-the-numbers voting-bloc strategy would do it. He is working on his lack of gravitas; but it remains to be seen whether corporate executives will make fundraising calls on his behalf, or will send him away with the campaign equivalent of beer-and-pizza money.

Bottom Line: It will be hard for Kasich to bury the suspicion that he's really running for the Vice Presidency.

NEWT GINGRICH

The Speaker of the House is a wild card: if he pursues the GOP nomination, he will make the race much less predictable. He still inspires donors like nobody else in the GOP, and any bid by him would immediately threaten Forbes, and perhaps Bush. The architect of the Republicans' 1994 takeover of Congress, Gingrich is a good long-term political strategist but given to making simple tactical mistakes. His intellectual creativity means that he is less hemmed in by orthodoxy, but also more erratic, than any other potential candidate. Although he's self-term-limited in 2002, the possibility of leading a Republican House with a Republican President may be too tempting to abandon.

Bottom Line: He's probably waiting to see if Bush slips.

JOHN McCAIN

Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) is a war hero with high scores from the conservative vote-counters. He gets fabulous press from boomer journalists embarrassed by their own war records. He would probably be a strong general-election candidate. If he runs, he and Dan Quayle will be the only two candidates with a foreign-policy profile. But he might not run. He hesitates because his ethical record is not spotless, though voters would probably forgive that in a former POW. Also, while he can tap a huge reservoir of respect, his signature issues—tightening campaign-finance restrictions and regulating tobacco—won't play well in Republican primaries. In fact, pro-life and pro-gun groups will probably treat him worse than they would a pro-abortion, anti-gun candidate because his campaign-finance bill threatened them as institutions.

Bottom Line: Can he persuade conservatives to give him a second look?

THE REST OF THE FIELD

New York Gov. George Pataki, set to win a smashing re-election victory this fall, could be the stalking horse for the anti-anti-abortion wing of the party. Whether or not he runs, he will get a serious look when it comes time to choose the second half of the ticket. Elizabeth Dole is popular with the public, the party establishment, and social conservatives; the Clinton scandal might improve a woman's chances of winning. And Mrs. Dole has Southern charm to burn. On the other hand, her popularity may be premised on her lack of a distinct political profile. She is probably a better prospect for the Vice Presidency than the Presidency. Jack Kemp's debate with Al Gore in 1996 hurt him badly, as have some policy lurches that seem attributable to his closeness to supply-side publicist Jude Wanniski; he is not expected to run.

As for the likes of Bill Weld and Rudolph Giuliani, who's kidding whom? **NR**

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Bishop Bubbles Pronounces His *Apology for Everything* a Success

June 31, 2004 — Bishop Bill Bubbles of the newly renamed Diocese of Perpetual Indulgence issued a pastoral letter last week entitled *Apology for Everything* in which he personally apologized for being "a hierarch, a male, and a Catholic." He confessed that "the church has judgmentally ostracized Catholics who have agonized over an unwanted pregnancy and terminated it, or who are lovingly intimate with persons of the same sex," adding, "I beg these wounded people to forgive the church for being uncharitable and return to the fold." Bubbles also apologized to non-Catholics for "the church's arrogant teaching that it possesses more truth than other faiths." That teaching, he said, "is a hate crime, for it has made Catholics intolerant." Bubbles ended his letter with a call for the Diocese to "be inclusive of everyone, regardless of lifestyle or personal belief."

Yesterday at a news conference at his Holy Presumption Cathedral, the bishop reported that the response to his letter, which he's been promoting on talk shows, has been "extremely heartening." Beaming, he gave several examples. The chancery office received calls from 29 alienated Catholics in committed same-sex relationships requesting that clergy find a way to bless their unions. Two pedophile priests who, after expensive lawsuits, were quietly reassigned to parishes on the outskirts of the Diocese have forgiven Bubbles for exiling them and asked that the Diocese establish an innovative Office for Child Ministry with them in charge. An ex-Catholic Buddhist prominent in ecumenical dialogue has asked to run the diocesan Office of Catechetics, saying that in our global multi-faith village she's ideally suited for the job. A homeless ex-con who did six years for drug-dealing ("the judge was vicious," said Bubbles) has volunteered to be a counselor at Camp Diversity, the diocesan youth camp. The bishop then announced that "all these requests will be joyfully granted." With a tear in his eye, Bubbles exclaimed, "If we love unconditionally, see what marvelous things can happen!"

Is this the future of the Church in America? People wonder, given the way things have been going in certain dioceses! If we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, an orthodox Catholic monthly magazine, could write a last paragraph to the above report, it would go like this: "Then Bubbles had to interrupt his news conference to take an urgent call from the Vatican. Upon his return, an ashen-faced Bill Bubbles announced that he's been stripped of his episcopal authority and is being sent to a monastery on Tierra del Fuego for 10 years to do penance." If that's how you'd write the last paragraph, subscribe today! We're committed to happy endings — and to ending the madness that is making a farce of the Church.

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1000 HOURS ALONE WITH THE FIRST LADY...
...AND WHAT ABOUT THIS REFERENCE ON PAGE 273?
THE STARR REPORT
SPORTS
500 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE LISTENING TO MONICA LEWINSKY TALK ABOUT POLICY...
...SO I GO, HEY, IM LIKE WHATEVER ABOUT WELFARE REFORM.
1500 HOURS OF COUNSELING WITH ORRIN HATCH...
...IMPEACH ME!!!

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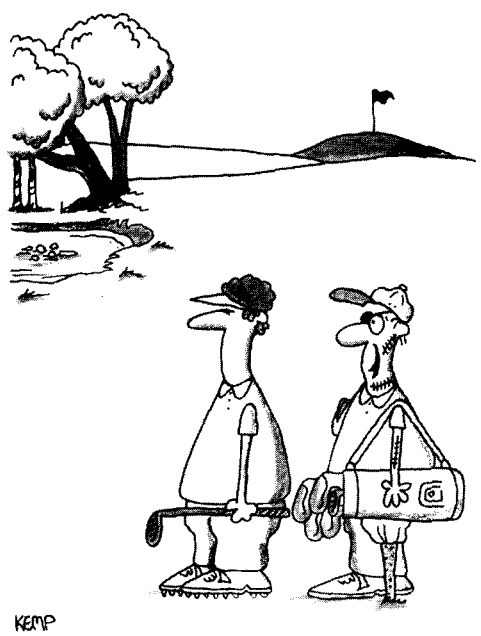
"I dreamt Kenneth Starr wrote a detailed report on my sex life and it didn't even fill half a sheet of paper."

"You've got to give her credit, she certainly knows how to deplore things."

"Mr. Trombly has cancelled his appointment. The Dow is up and he's feeling no pain."



"Oh, tough break sir. Right in the old gator hazard. If I was you, sir, I'd forget all about the ball and take the stroke. Yes sir, that's what I'd do. Yesiree Bob!"

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TO: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
FROM: darmey@houseofreps.gov
RE: We've got him on the ropes!
Newt: It's looking great for us on November 3rd! We've got a balanced budget, a surplus (!), and the pollsters tell me that we're going to pick up about a dozen seats.

Say, speaking of the surplus . . . any chance of getting a teeny-tiny ($30 million–$40 million neighborhood) line item in that appropriations bill for a few local things I've got going back home?
Dick
PS: Maybe next year, when he's really really really on the ropes, we should talk tax cuts.

TO: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
FROM: tdelay@whip.houseofreps.gov
RE: The Republican revolution!
Newt: What can I say? The prairie fire we lit in 1994 has become a bonfire!

But let me buttonhole you for a little project I'm kind of godfathering through the process. Just a billion or two, but it would mean a lot to the folks back home.

It's nice to finally have Bill Clinton where we want him, don't you think??
Tom

TO: tlott@majorityleader.senate.gov
FROM: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
RE: Budget deal
Trent: I'm a little concerned about the budget deal. I thought the strategy was to say "no" to the President on pretty much everything he wants, and to force him to veto a tax cut. I've been pretty busy lately being outraged and statesmanlike in re: the Monica thing, but I'm concerned that we've shifted course. Have we?
Newt

TO: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
FROM: tlott@majorityleader.senate.gov
RE: RE: Budget deal
Newt: Are you kidding? No way! It's full steam ahead! Do you guys over there have any objection to a couple of national archive depositories being relocated to somewhere in, say, Mississippi?
Trent

TO: tlott@majorityleader.senate.gov
FROM: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
RE: RE: RE: Budget deal
Trent: See, this is kind of what I'm talking about. We're supposed to be the fiscal tightwads, right? I'm just a little worried that we might be giving away our leverage. Shouldn't we be cutting the budget, instead of adding to it? And what happened to the tax cut?
Newt

TO: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
FROM: tlott@majorityleader.senate.gov
You know what your problem is? You're a killjoy. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, Newt. I agree that tax cuts are important. But they're perfect. Power plants, milk programs, and freeway overpasses are good. Trust me.
Trent
PS: I'm just going to assume that the archives thing is okay with you guys and put it on in. Also: a couple of guys over here want to talk about where the Army is planning to build those new jeep things we've ordered them to build.

TO: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
FROM: hhyde@judiciary.houseofreps.gov
RE: Next steps
I've got only a few minutes, so I'll make this brief. Impeachment full speed ahead. Can I get a couple of buildings in my district made into national landmarks? I'll get you the list tomorrow AM.
H

TO: hhyde@judiciary.houseofreps.gov
FROM: newtging@speaker.houseofreps.gov
CC:tdelay@whip.houseofreps.gov, darmey@houseofreps.gov
RE: Pork
Guys: Look, the whole point of being a transforming Congress is that we have the opportunity to effect meaningful budgetary change. So let me be totally clear with you: this time, and this time ONLY, you can have your pet projects attached to the budget bill. But only because we've got Bill Clinton in a bind. So you guys can have your power-plant subsidies, your research grants, your freeway overpasses but just this ONE TIME. Deal?
Newt
PS: I need someone to co-sponsor an amendment for a small-potatoes defense contract. Any takers?

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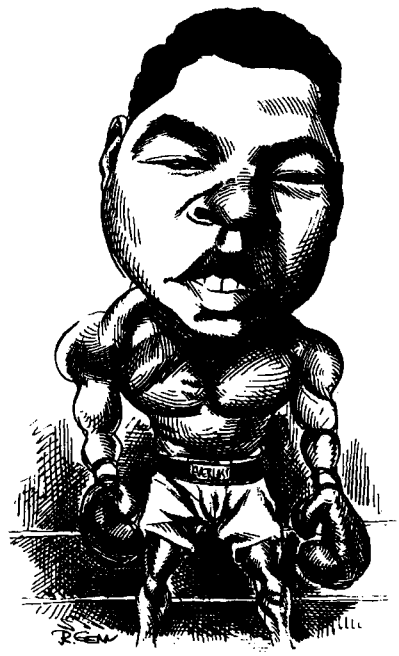
Still the Greatest

D. KEITH MANO

King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero, by David Remnick (Random House, 310 pp., $25)

SINCE first I became aware of Muhammad Ali, a/k/a Cassius Clay, I seem invariably to have misjudged him both as athlete and as black cultural icon. For starters I bet $500 against Ali in his first championship match with Sonny Liston. And I too easily assumed that Ali was, at best, a perfunctory Muslim, who did not deserve conscientious-objector status and who had certainly feigned obtuseness on his draft-board aptitude test in order to evade military service. I now know better than that. If anything, Ali had a convert's zeal, and his 1-Y standing was more an indictment of the aptitude-test procedure than of his intelligence, which has always been substantial.

The proximate cause of this rather tardy admission on my part is an engrossing and important book by *New Yorker* editor David Remnick, entitled *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero*. With Dürer-like detail Remnick has painted a triptych—three black American heavyweights, who serve to represent our several ways of engaging the race problem from 1963, say, to 1971 or so. There was, first, Floyd Patterson, an Uncle Tom to many blacks, the reform-school alumnus who stood for integration, accommodation, and decency, while fighting out of an overly defensive "peekaboo" stance. Next, the "Bad Negro," Charles "Sonny" Liston, a glowering, yellow-eyed Mafia leg-breaker, ex-con, who (so much for decency) pulped Patterson twice and was one of 25 children sired by a cruel, illiterate sharecropper. Between those two, painted on the main panel (and middle-class by Liston standards) stood Ali himself—he would beat Liston twice and Patterson once, while becoming, Remnick convinces us, something new in the world.



New, for one thing, because he turned a sport into performance art, creating the "Louisville Lip," a faux-naïf character of the tall-tale Bunyonesque mode, who expressed himself in energetic, if abecedarian, rhymes. Listen to this excerpt from "Song of Myself."

Yes, the crowd did not dream
When they laid down their money
That they would see
A total eclipse of the Sonny.
I am the greatest!

Put the right hip-hop beat under that and you have—as Remnick points out—"the first rapper, the precursor to Tupac Shakur and Puff Daddy." Ali's poetry exactly anticipated the sort of black adolescent swagger that you can hear in rap recitative today. He knew how important TV was for the diffusion of hype. And, of course, it didn't hurt that Ali had magical reflexes, deep courage, ring wisdom, a perfect physique, and the prettiest face since Errol Flynn played *Gentleman Jim*.

Ali's stand against U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, which began with his celebrated remark, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong," was as self-serving as any reluctant draftee's might be. (Ali had just gotten reclassified as 1-A.) But it was also a principled and very expensive position for Ali to take. He was given the max for draft evasion (five years in prison) and, though the Supreme Court vindicated him unanimously, he was unable to fight during the three-year-long appeal process—at a cost in gate receipts and endorsements of well over eight figures (not to mention popularity). It was a deplorable moment for American jurisprudence. And for those, myself among them, who assented to his disentitlement by their silence.

Ali, as you recall, put Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam on the American spiritual map. Ali had been intrigued by Islam since teenhood. Malcolm X, in time, would designate himself as personal apostle to Cassius Clay—they became good, even intimate friends, and Clay converted formally to Islam soon thereafter. (Ali later repudiated Malcolm X at Elijah Muhammad's insistence—one of the few events in his life, you gather from Remnick, that Ali has come to regret.) The "Black Muslims" were scary—as they intended to be—and somehow Ali's championship meant that Islam had taken over boxing and would corrupt our children through the Madison Square Garden microphone or whatever. Floyd Patterson actually saw himself as "the Christian savior of boxing" and challenged the new Saladin to defend his faith in the ring. (Christianity got whupped.) These were, as they say, interesting times.

Mr. Mano's most recent novel, *The Fergus Dialogues*, will be published by International Scholars Publications this autumn. His seventh novel, *Take Five* (1982), was republished in September by Dalkey Archive Press.

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Times, not so long ago, that Remnick has captured deftly here. Familiar as readers may think they are with the Ali legend, there is still much to be learned from *King of the World*. And the fight scenes are absolutely riveting—written with an excitement and an immediacy that only someone who loves his subject matter can consistently pull off. Remnick provides a versatile tool with which to probe the history of the Sixties in America.

Sonny Liston died under suspicious circumstances. Floyd Patterson has lost his memory. As for Ali: though still a Muslim, he doesn't make political pronouncements any more. So it is, I hope, appropriate for me to say, Let bygones be bygones, as we both—born just weeks apart—slip into the stiffening darkness of Parkinson's. **NR**

River Dance

RAMESH PONNURU

The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions, by William G. Bowen and Derek Bok (Princeton, 472 pp., $24.95)

THE debate over racial preferences takes place on almost every conceivable level: economic, moral, constitutional. In the course of this debate, numerous empirical claims have been made. For instance, critics suggest that preferences harm even their beneficiaries by putting them in academic environments a notch or two above what they can handle. Until now it has been difficult to sort out these claims, not least because institutions that practice preferential treatment have been reluctant to disclose the data.

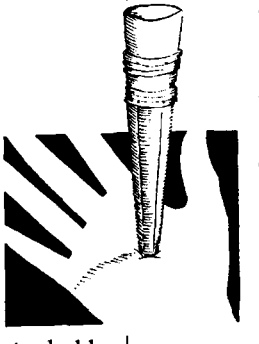
With *The Shape of the River*, the former presidents of Princeton and Harvard, William G. Bowen and Derek Bok, attempt to make the definitive statistical case for preferences. (The title, in case you're wondering, is a pretentious elaboration of the notion of an educational "pipeline" leading from primary school to high school to college and beyond; its point appears to be to let B&B sprinkle in otherwise irrelevant quotes from Mark Twain.)

The number-crunching is certainly impressive: there are about 150 graphs and charts in here, many of them—okay, I didn't examine every one—illuminating. But the focus is limited (partly because most colleges aren't selective at all and thus don't use preferences) to 28 elite colleges and universities, including Princeton but not Harvard.

B&B provide some perspective on the degree of preference such selective schools give to racial minorities. People who think these institutions admit certain students "just because they're black" will learn that most black applicants to the five schools for which B&B had the most data had higher SAT scores than the average white test-taker, and that the average score for black matriculants to these schools was higher than the average for all matriculants in 1951. Useful also is B&B's point that substantial gaps would still separate the average SAT scores of blacks and whites on a particular campus even under a race-neutral standard: there are just too few really high-scoring blacks. Still, it remains true that among those five schools, a black applicant with scores between 1200 and 1249 has three times as great a chance of acceptance as a white in the same score range.

The meat of the book's argument is that black students with the same SAT scores do better the more selective their college, even if their scores are far below the norm. "Doing better" can be measured by graduation rates, post-graduate degree attainment, earnings, and self-reported satisfaction. Black graduates of these 28 schools were actually more likely to get degrees in law or medicine than were their white counterparts (of course, preferences apply here too).

The worm in the bud is that black students have lower grades—their grades on average, even if you include those students who made it without preferences, put them in the 23rd percentile of students—and grad- uation rates than their white classmates. B&B argue that this does not confirm the mismatch thesis of preference critics because the likelihood of black students' graduation rises with the selectivity of the school (again, holding SATs constant).



But this is true for white students as well. Hence Abigail Thernstrom, coauthor with her husband, Stephan, of last year's *America in Black and White*, seizes on the racial disparity in dropout rates—and this rises with selectivity. At the 28 colleges the black dropout rate (25 per cent) is 78 per cent higher than the white (14 per cent); at the most selective of these it is three times higher (15 *vs.* 5 per cent).

B&B refer in passing to the possibility that under a race-neutral standard students who were refused admission to the most selective schools would simply drop down one tier to a slightly less selective school, but the authors then glide past the point (or seem to: their prose is murky) to reach their conclusion that the number of black students at the 28 colleges would fall by 50 per cent. Mrs. Thernstrom figures that taking the point seriously reduces the decline to something more like 14 per cent.

■

The authors' notion that *ending preferences would* only marginally increase white students' odds of acceptance assumes what is at issue: that it is appropriate to classify students by race.

■

No doubt it will be a while before the statistical dust settles. But those of us who are not social scientists need not fret about the outcome: not much turns on it. The policy dispute has concerned state-sponsored preferences—California's Proposition 209 affects only state universities—not the practices of elite private schools. And the key issue that opponents of preferences have raised is fairness, not lifetime earnings. But B&B insist on misstating the opponents' case: "There is a widespread misconception that scores and grades represent the only truly valid considerations in deciding whom to admit to a selective institution." I am aware of no critic of racial preferences who denies that athletic ability, artistic talent, community

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service, and other attributes and achievements should be considered in admissions decisions. What critics object to is the use of one criterion, race, which is not a proxy for those qualities and has no relationship to any reasonable definition of merit. But B&B insist on deconstructing "merit" (their sneer quotes), which takes them in some odd directions. At one point they note that "grades and test scores are a reflection not only of effort but of intelligence, which in turn derives from a number of factors," as if this were some sort of indictment.

As these passages suggest, B&B are simply hopeless on moral reasoning. That's why they can't explain why they oppose quotas. Or consider the handicapped-parking analogy they borrow from Thomas J. Kane: "Eliminating the reserved space would have only a minuscule effect on parking options for non-disabled drivers. But the sight of the open space will frustrate many passing motorists who are looking for a space." Leave aside the revealing comparison of blackness to a disability. The notion that ending preferences would only marginally increase white students' odds of acceptance, to which B&B return several times, assumes what is at issue: that it is appropriate to classify students by race. Critics are concerned about unfairness to individuals, not to a racially defined group.

B&B are even less persuasive in arguing for the educational value of racial diversity. So what if most students at the 28 schools made friends across racial lines? Most people everywhere do, including people who don't go to college at all.

Finally, B&B fail to explain why elite colleges matter. Their graduates are too small a segment of the population to significantly narrow the black–white earnings gap, as the authors seem to suggest, or to create a strong black middle class. What B&B are really talking about, then, is the formation of a multiracial elite (with the proper attitudes); but as liberals, they're uncomfortable saying so.

The Shape of the River may have something to say about some subsidiary arguments in the racial-preferences debate. But it dodges the main issues and settles nothing. Finally, it ignores everything upstream: the far more consequential question of how to improve K–12 education, particularly in the cities. And to that task, racial preferences are, at best, an affirmative distraction. **NR**

Out and About

FLORENCE KING

Empty without You: The Intimate Letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok, edited by Rodger Streitmatter (Free Press, 307 pp., $25)

READING other people's love letters is a bummer, especially when one of the parties is a professional writer and the other a commaless wonder. Then you get a choice between parsed sweet nothings and dangling sweet nothings.

Eleanor Roosevelt and Lorena Hickok were polar opposites. Where ER was puritanical and abstemious, "Hick," as she was known to her Associated Press colleagues, was a cussing, drinking, chainsmoking newspaperwoman and a hulking butch lesbian whose sexual proclivities were common knowledge. The daughter of a South Dakota itinerant laborer who disowned her when she was 14, she had pulled herself up by her bootstraps to become one of America's top political reporters.

In 1932 the 40-year-old Hick covered FDR's first presidential campaign and developed a starry-eyed crush on the candidate's 49-year-old wife. For her part Eleanor Roosevelt began to single Hick out of the press pack and show her favoritism. The crop-haired, baggy-suited reporter was invited to breakfast alone with the future First Lady, stay in her Hyde Park cottage, and accompany her on family visits. In return Hick gave Eleanor a diamond-and-sapphire ring that had been presented to her by opera diva Ernestine Schumann-Heink in gratitude for a flattering interview. Eleanor not only accepted it, but wore it.

Hick's editors pressed her for the inside stories and scoops she was in a position to get but she would not risk losing ER's trust. Worse, she committed journalism's unforgivable sin when she let FDR's advisors vet her copy. By the end of the victorious campaign her objectivity, and hence her newspaper career, was gone. Invited to spend Inauguration week in the Mayflower Hotel with the Roosevelt party, she sealed her professional fate when she was shown a final draft of FDR's First Inaugural address and failed to report its contents to her AP boss.

Shortly thereafter she quit the AP and went to work for the New Deal as an inspector of relief programs, driving around the country and writing up reports. Between trips she lived in the White House, sleeping in a room adjoining ER's.

When Hick was on the road she and ER began a correspondence that would continue, with diminishing intensity, for the rest of their lives. The most significant letters were written in 1933–35 when their intimacy was at white heat. These caused a sensation when the collection was made public by the Roosevelt Library in 1978. Since then, Roosevelt scholars with a penchant for Gay Liberation have insisted that ER and Hick had a lesbian affair, while traditional Roosevelt scholars have just as insistently countered that the letters evince nothing but the lavish affection that otherwise repressed Victorian ladies sometimes poured out on their friends.

The Victorian theory does not fit the decidedly unladylike Hick, who, though born in 1892, was not repressed. She had

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been "out" since girlhood, had lived with a female lover in Minneapolis, and had made a pass at a woman reporter when the two shared a hotel room.

As for ER, she was Victorian, repressed, and a lady, but she was known to hang out with lesbians. In the Twenties she was a regular visitor to the Greenwich Village digs of lawyer Elizabeth Read and her companion Esther Lape; and was fast friends with Nan Cook and Marion Dickerman, who built a cottage on Hyde Park property where Nan made handcrafted furniture, carving their three monograms, "E.N.M.," in each piece.

Hick's most explicit letter to ER recalls

■

'I want to put my arms around you, I ache to hold you close.'

■

with longing "the feeling of that soft spot just northeast of the corner of your mouth against my lips."

ER's letters typically begin and end with intimate sentiments: "Hick my dearest, I cannot go to bed tonight without a word to you. I felt a little as though a part of me was leaving tonight, you have grown so much to be a part of my life that it is empty without you even though I'm busy every minute." She then launches into a breathless description of her White House day, closing with a wish "to put my arms around you."

After they had talked on the phone while her son was in the room she wrote: "Jimmy was near & I couldn't say '*je t'aime et je t'adore*' as I longed to do but always remember I am saying it & that I go to sleep thinking of you & repeating our little saying."

The ring: "Hick darling, I want to put my arms around you, I ache to hold you close. Your ring is a great comfort, I look at it & think she does love me, or I wouldn't be wearing it!"

Hick's photo on her mantel: "Oh! how I wanted to put my arms around you in reality instead of in print. I went & kissed your photograph instead & tears were in my eyes. Please keep most of your heart in Washington as long as I'm here for most of mine is with you!"

In 1933 when Eleanor could still move about unrecognized the women motored alone through the remote Adirondacks. In *Reluctant First Lady*, the biography Hick published after ER's death, she describes a revealing incident in a tourist cabin: "Mrs. Roosevelt started thrusting her long, slender fingers in my direction. I was so ticklish that all she had to do to reduce me to a quivering mass of pulp was to point her fingers at me." In no time, she confessed, ER had her "writhing out of control."

Was this highly symbolic language a code for something more? Whatever their relationship was or was not, by 1935 the dew was off the rose. Now we find ER writing: "I know you often have a feeling for me which for one reason or another I may not return in kind but I feel I love you just the same . . ."

As ER pulled back, Hick's letters descended into lovesickness: "At times life becomes just one long, dreary ache for you." Always moody, she now spoke of life not being worth living and hinted of suicide.

Nonetheless, they kept in touch, exchanging some 3,500 letters by the time ER died in 1962. Of these, 300 were chosen for inclusion in *Empty without You* by editor Rodger Streitmatter, whose previous books include *Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America*. Although his commentaries leave no doubt that he hopes ER and Hick had a full-fledged affair, he believes that the more important question is: "What impact did the relationship have on each woman?"

He credits Hick with inspiring ER's activist First Ladyship and hints that without her ER might have stayed home and baked cookies. This is a stretch; she had taken up socialistic meddling in the Twenties before the two met. He is correct, however, in his claim that Hick made a writer out of her. The former star reporter edited ER's early efforts, teaching her how to organize her feverish thoughts until she was able to write an autobiography and a syndicated column, "My Day," that ran six days a week for 27 years.

Meanwhile, Hick, too old to return to newspapering, was reduced to writing publicity for the World's Fair and books for "young adults." In a supreme twist of irony, this masculine woman was thrust into the feminine role of the supportive wife. Once a respected professional, she had sacrificed her career and identity on ER's altar and wound up in obscurity and genteel poverty. That she regretted her decision is clear from her reaction to a patronizing description of herself in ER's autobiography: "In those days I was somebody in my own right. I was just about the top gal reporter in the country."

Did they or didn't they? I say no, but Streitmatter, like most Eleanor writers, is too respectful of her lauded humanitarianism to see her for what she was: a tease. It's clear to me that a lot of hugging and kissing went on, but when Hick tried to go further ER hit the brakes while at the same time behaving in ways that would encourage Hick to try again. The tickling episode is a case in point: ER employed this horseplay as the repressed often do, as an innocent way of "accidentally" touching forbidden places.

She also dragged the obese Hick along on vigorous hikes, then laughed when she got short of breath and lectured her about her smoking. Here we see the insecure, unattractive woman who at long last has found someone even more insecure and unattractive than herself, calling attention to her companion's gaucherie in order to feel, for once in her life, like the belle of the ball. **NR**

Poppycock

JACOB SULLUM

Opium: A History, by Martin Booth (St. Martin's, 381 pp., $24.95)

CHINESE Empress Wan Jung, Martin Booth informs us in his history of opium, was "heavily addicted" to the drug, and "her death, when it came in June 1946, was directly attributable to opium." Booth explains that the empress underwent withdrawal while imprisoned by the Communists, who ignored her pleas for opium. But it turns out that they also "refused to feed her," a much more plausible explanation for her death.

Although opiate withdrawal is not exactly pleasant, the experience is typically no worse than the flu. Such symp-

Mr. Sullum, a senior editor at *Reason*, is the author of *For Your Own Good: The Anti-Smoking Crusade and the Tyranny of Public Health* (Free Press).

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toms might hasten the demise of someone who was denied food (and water?), but to blame the empress's death on opium is a stretch.

The notion that regular users of opium die if they stop taking the drug is an extreme version of a widespread misconception about addiction: that people continue using drugs mainly to avoid the physical consequences of withdrawal. If that were true, it would be hard to explain why addicts relapse long after withdrawal is complete. Or why heroin users who develop tolerance have been known to stop taking the drug for a while so that they can resume the habit at a lower (and less expensive) dose. Or why people become addicted to drugs, such as cocaine and amphetamines, that they can stop using with few or no physical symptoms.

According to Martin Booth's definition, a cancer patient who receives morphine for pain is an addict, but someone who smokes crack every day is not.

This emphasis on the discomfort of withdrawal gives short shrift to the personal and environmental factors that explain why different people in different situations react differently to the same drug. It reflects a kind of voodoo pharmacology that attributes quasi-magical properties to psychoactive substances. Booth's uncritical acceptance of voodoo pharmacology is the main flaw in *Opium: A History*, an often interesting and illuminating account that will be useful to both sides in the debate over the war on drugs.

Booth, a British novelist who has written several nonfiction books, follows the opium poppy from its earliest known use for narcotic purposes, by the Sumerians around 3400 B.C. Much of the book deals with the nineteenth century, which saw the emergence of a thriving international opium trade, the isolation of morphine, the development of intravenous injection, the invention of a powerful opium derivative dubbed "heroin," and the proliferation of opium-based products, ranging from laudanum to Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. The blurring of medical and nonmedical uses during this period, when opiates were freely available without a prescription, set the stage for the ongoing attempt to enforce a distinction between licit pain relief and illicit intoxication.

In discussing opium's dark side, Booth mistakenly equates addiction with "physical dependence." Anyone who uses opiates frequently enough will become physically dependent, meaning he will experience noticeable withdrawal symptoms if he stops abruptly. But physical dependence is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for addiction, which requires a persistent desire to use a drug for its psychoactive effects. According to Booth's definition, a cancer patient who receives morphine for pain is an addict, but someone who smokes crack every day is not.

To make an addict, Booth seems to be saying, you need only take a human being and add the right chemical. But if research, everyday experience, and common sense tell us anything about addiction, it is that people are more likely to become strongly attached to a drug—whether heroin or alcohol—when they have few other ways to find pleasure or cope with stress.

If, as Booth suggests, drugs themselves cause addiction, the only thing separating actual addicts from potential addicts (i.e., the rest of us) is the decision to experi-

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ment. In the case of heroin, Booth avers, "addiction can start with the very first dose," and "with continued use addiction is a certainty." He even asserts that, contrary to all those cop movies and television shows, police never verify that a bag of white powder contains heroin by tasting it, because "such behaviour is a sure-fire way to attain an addiction." There is no basis for such claims. Surveys consistently find that, as with alcohol, the vast majority of people who have tried heroin do not use the drug frequently enough to qualify as addicts.

Long before such data were available, the comparison between opiates and alcohol seemed natural to many. As Booth notes, the analogy was conspicuous in the nineteenth-century debate over Britain's opium trade with China: "It was . . . frequently aired that if opium was injurious, it was no more so than alcohol was in Britain. . . . An American doctor even went so far as to say alcoholics should change to opiates, thereby causing less harm to their health and families."

Booth, who seems to sympathize with the Chinese tyrants who used summary executions to suppress opium consumption, calls the British arguments "spurious and devious," but he never refutes them. Indeed, his book offers empirical support for defenders of the opium trade. Booth quotes a Chinese merchant who, though he disapproved of opium, nevertheless conceded that "many use it occasionally, but are not addicted. . . . Most Chinese who use opium do so for pleasure, just as other people smoke cigars or cigarettes." Booth himself describes artists, intellectuals, and professionals whose productivity was not impaired by their opiate use.

As for health consequences, the "American doctor" who so boldly suggested that heavy drinking is more debilitating than regular opiate consumption was on solid scientific ground. Booth rightly notes that "opiates in themselves are relatively safe drugs and even today addicts in receipt of opiates on prescription, and who maintain a stable, hygienic lifestyle, can be virtually indistinguishable from non-drug users and suffer no serious damage." Yet he immediately launches into a horrifying litany of "medical complications," including hepatitis and "advanced tooth decay," none of which is caused by opiates per se.

Despite his often credulous attitude toward the official line on drugs, Booth ultimately concludes that "prohibition doesn't work." After reading his detailed descriptions of smuggling techniques and his analysis of the huge profit margins created by the attempt to suppress drug use, you can see why. Booth also notes that prohibition has unpleasant side effects, including property crime, black-market violence, uncertain drug quality, and the "forbidden fruit" effect. On the other hand, he rejects decriminalization, which he calls "a handsome dream but impractical." His reasons for that assessment are fuzzy.

Booth rightly decries British and American "panic" and "hysteria" on the subject of drug abuse in the decades before World War II. Yet his own rhetoric is often hyperbolic. Opium, he says, has "destroyed millions of lives, enslaved whole cultures, and invidiously corrupted human society to its very core." On the basis of an article from *Newsweek* (a magazine that is not known for calm reporting on the drug issue), Booth says New York "was in a virtual state of siege [in 1971]. The city . . . was being killed by heroin."

Before you've had time to digest that whopper, Booth leaps over nearly three decades with the assertion, "The situation is little changed today." He says "drugs are still at the forefront of the American consciousness, as opinion polls show: most Americans consider drugs the greatest problem facing their nation." Actually, polls indicate that drugs are far down the list of public concerns. At its best and at its worst, Booth's history suggests why that is probably a good thing. **NR**

D.C. Confidential

CLAIRE BERLINSKI

Secrecy: The American Experience, by Daniel Patrick Moynihan (Yale, 320 pp., $22.50)

IN 1997, the Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy, chaired by Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, concluded that the government classifies vastly too many documents—millions every year—while failing to distinguish among different sorts of documents and protect secrets of real importance. What's more, reads the commission's report, secrecy is inherently antithetical to open debate in a flourishing democracy, and the perception of a government bloated with secrets erodes public trust.

Moynihan continues in this vein in *Secrecy: The American Experience*, making the case that the government's habits of secrecy no longer serve the national interest—if they ever did. It's an argument the senator is bound to win, although not necessarily because he is right. To say whether secrecy on a large scale is still necessary without knowing what secrets we are talking about is impossible, and if the keeping of some of those secrets is truly vital to national security, anyone in a position to rebut the senator's argument will have to remain silent.

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'Secrecy is for losers,' writes Sen. Moynihan. But if so, why does he use as his key example the century's most spectacular foreign policy victory?

■

This methodological quibble aside, Moynihan has provided us with an interesting history of secrecy in the United States, and a provocative meditation on the patterns and implications of secrecy in government. Elaborating upon Max Weber's observations about bureaucracy, Moynihan argues that secrecy's functional purpose—keeping critical information from an enemy—has become secondary to its institutional and ritualistic aspects, and that it is used to distinguish insiders from outsiders. Moreover, secrecy in foreign policy creates the same sort of excesses that regulation does in the domestic sphere.

Moynihan might have stopped there, leaving behind an impressive *a priori* case against secrecy. Instead, he attempts to ground his case in historical arguments,

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and while his narratives are fascinating, his conclusions are tenuous.

Moynihan identifies secrecy as the thread connecting the "most disastrous" events of the Cold War, but he fails to show that secrecy was responsible for these events, or, for that matter, that they were disastrous. He begins with the so-called Venona Project, the recently disclosed files containing messages sent by Soviet agents in the United States to their handlers in Moscow between 1940 and 1948. Intercepted and decoded by the U.S. Army, their contents were kept secret to prevent the Soviets from realizing their code had been broken. The Venona intercepts proved beyond dispute that strategically placed Americans were providing the Soviet Union with crucially sensitive information about national-security matters ranging from diplomatic talking points to the details of the Manhattan Project. Soviet agents were identified in the State Department, the FBI, and the nuclear research and production complex at Los Alamos. Yet the Venona Project was so secret that even President Truman was unaware of its existence.

There is no justification for having allowed the Commander-in-Chief to remain ignorant of the extent of Soviet espionage on American soil, and Moynihan could have allowed his argument to rest there. But he presses on, blaming the turmoil of the McCarthy era on the Army's failure to unveil the files. Exposing the cables, he imagines, would have neutered Sen. McCarthy by illustrating the limited extent of the Soviet presence, while simultaneously slapping sense into those who saw in the Cold War only a right-wing plot to repress radical reform. This, he suggests, would have spared the country years of idiocy from Soviet apologists and fellow-travelers in American academia.

But why on earth would he think this? Common sense suggests that the disclosure of the files would have sparked hysteria on the Right, confirming its worst suspicions. And the Left repeatedly showed itself to be preternaturally immune to evidence about the Soviet Union: the files would have been merely something else to ignore.

Another "disastrous" consequence of secrecy, argues Moynihan, was the debt accumulated during the Reagan-era arms buildup. He charges that U.S. intelligence services relied so heavily on flawed methods of data collection and analysis that they were unable to predict what was obvious to anyone with eyes—that the Soviet Union was on the verge of collapse. Presidents Carter and Reagan, he claims, formulated their defense strategies in response to estimates of Soviet strength untested by public criticism. As a result, writes Richard Gid Powers in the introduction, "America, facing an adversary gasping out its last breaths, [spent] itself into debilitating debt . . ."

It is difficult to agree with Moynihan's assertion that the policies which led to the peaceful disintegration of the Soviet Union were a disaster, whatever the merits of the intelligence upon which they were predicated. And in fact, while it is often said that the CIA failed to predict the Soviet Union's collapse, the evidence suggests otherwise—economists commissioned by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence in 1991, for example, found that the CIA had "regularly reported the steady decline in the Soviet growth rate and called attention to the deep and structural problems that pointed to continual decline." The pressure to match the U.S. in defense spending was an added burden on the Soviet economy, and probably hastened the empire's collapse. "Secrecy is for losers," writes Moynihan, but if so, why does he use as his key example the century's most spectacular foreign-policy victory?

But these non-sequiturs should not deter the reader. Sen. Moynihan's heart is in the right place, and his abstract arguments for greater openness in government are strong enough to carry the book. In the end, it is hard to argue with the observation that the "consent of the governed" is meaningful only if the governed know what the government is doing. **NR**

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■ ARCHITECTURE ■

Simply Grand

JEFFREY HART

WHEN New York's Grand Central Terminal was rededicated on October 1, after a decade-long, $200-million renovation, the event came as a brilliant shaft of light amid the many glooms of the current cultural situation. For the effort of those ten years reclaimed a great public space—accommodating a major structure from the steel/coal/oil age to late-twentieth-century tastes. And that reclamation is of prime historical, perhaps even philosophical, importance.

It need not have turned out this way. In a dialectical sense the very survival of Grand Central is due to the 1963 destruction, across town, of McKim, Mead, and White's Pennsylvania Station. This act of economically driven barbarism gave energy to New York City's preservation movement, which now has real clout.

The structure which might have gone the way of Penn Station arose in 1903–13, conceived by the architects Warren and Wetmore as a frankly imperial statement. Like almost all the great New York public buildings of that period it was constructed upon the tidal wave of industrial and commercial wealth that flowed out of the Union victory in the Civil War. In Manhattan the wealth moved north from Washington Square to Gramercy Park and 23rd Street, and then along Park and Madison Avenues to 42nd Street, where Grand Central was built, and soon beyond.

Grand Central Terminal was to be a temple of rail power, and as such it was complementary to three other great Beaux-Arts statements about the components of civilization; the New York Public Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Natural History. Mark Twain ineptly called the era that produced these magnificent structures "The Gilded Age." Gilded? They could withstand a nuclear attack.

With Grand Central we associate the name of Cornelius J. "Commodore" Vanderbilt. Standing like a Roman consul, his statue embellishes the magnificent south façade on 42nd Street. As a boy Vanderbilt had begun with a single sailboat ferrying passengers from Staten Island to downtown Manhattan. More sailboats allowed him to expand into barges and then steamer transportation on the rivers. He was the first to understand that the future belonged to railroads, as the Union rushed the construction of military rail lines running east to west along the northern edge of the Confederacy. At length Vanderbilt commanded a rail empire that reached from New York to Chicago.

As you approach Grand Central from the south along Park Avenue, what you see is in a sense a monument to the Commodore. The façade is a Roman tri-

umphal arch, symbolizing the gateway to the City, its pairs of Corinthian columns flanking three enormous arched windows. These columns support an entablature at the center of which is a dominating sculpture group presenting the figures of Mercury, symbolic of commerce, and Minerva, goddess of intellect. A huge clock stands at the center of the group, since time is the essence of transportation.

The interior lives up to this magnificent façade. Passing through the waiting room—itself an impressive space though still not fully renovated—you enter the enormous vault, 470 feet long and 125 feet high, of the main concourse, based upon the model of Roman baths, a large civic space full of hurry and buzz, the modern equivalent of an ancient town square. From the now cleansed arched windows on either end, diagonals of light shine into the vast vault. No one, not even today's commuters hurrying along, can pass through this space without experiencing the presence of a powerful architectural will, a will analogous to that of the men who built the great railroads.

Today, thanks to the architectural firm of Bever, Blinder, and Belle, which oversaw the renovation, the visitor will find that interior reborn. Perhaps it has even been improved beyond its pristine state when the station opened in 1913. The blue-green ceiling of the vault has been completely cleared of grime and restored, small light-bulbs marking the figures of the Zodiac within the depths of the heavens. Gone now are the drab shops that used to line the corridors to Lexington Avenue—dismal hot-dog stands, pizza and pretzel parlors, tacky novelty sellers—as well as the "homeless" people who monopolized the benches in the waiting room. In their place we will soon have dozens of upscale stores with glistening windows: Citarella, Banana Republic, Discovery Channel, Starbucks, City Bakery, jewelry stores, fine clothiers. In the main concourse, on the north balcony, Michael Jordan's New York Steakhouse has opened, and Cipriani Dolci and Metrazur will follow later this year; two chevron-painted circular bars flank the entry of Michael Jordan's, with beyond them public dining areas with a rosewood ceiling. A new marble staircase has been constructed on the east end of the concoure to complement the staircase on the west, the acquisition of the matching marble requiring the reopening of a Tennessee quarry.

The rebirth of Grand Central is rich in symbolism. When it opened 85 years ago, the place represented the energies of the previous century's industrial America, already a world power with its coal, iron, and petroleum. The end of this century,

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The renovation of New York's Grand Central Terminal came as a brilliant shaft of light amid the current cultural situation.

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with its emphasis on high technology, service, and consumption, is reflected in lighter, more refined tastes, yet these have been combined effectively with the symbols of the industrial past.

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More locally, the renovated Grand Central symbolizes the strong sense of civic rebirth that has been growing during the past few years, certainly because of prosperity but also because of the energetic administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani—cleaner streets, less crime, less obtrusive "homeless" people, no race riots, demagogues mostly quiescent, a sense, not altogether illusory, of greater general politeness. Set against the memory of Pennsylvania Station, the renovation of Grand Central reminds us that a dynamic economy can not only destroy in order to make way for the new, but also preserve what is valuable in the past.

Above all, maybe, here is the eternal hope of art: that by demonstrating excellence, or even merely the good, it will define the bad and encourage its rejection not only in art but, so the ancient belief goes, also in morality and politics. **NR**

■ **FILM** ■

Mass-Market Metaphysics

JOHN SIMON

SOME films are not merely bad. Bad will, understandably, always constitute a solid majority. Truly deleterious is a combination of pretentiousness and mendacity: the kind of movie that has the cheek to accost metaphysics, and to denature or pervert everything it touches. (Archetype: *Ghost.*) It peddles a transcendental feelgoodism, a trashy substitute for serious thought about death, offering fake solace to the gullible. Call it eschatological escapism.

Such a film is ***What Dreams May Come***, which, pretending to deal with life and death, heaven and hell, can truly be said to smell to high heaven. What makes it especially odious is that it is not the work of run-of-the-mill vulgarians but of fairly sophisticated hucksters. It is based "upon" a novel by Richard Matheson, a well-known sci-fi and horror-story writer, who has contributed to such cultural landmarks as *Twilight Zone*, *Star Trek*, and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.

It was adapted and executive-produced by Ronald Bass, one of cinema's most hyperactive polygraphers, educated at Stanford, Yale, and the Harvard Law School, who, we are told, "continues to write daily during the morning and is one of the industry's most sought-after writers." Judging by the number of his published or filmed works, he must write till noon, and spend the rest of the day being sought after.

The movie was directed by Vincent Ward, a New Zealander whose earlier and chaster films held promise, but who was devoured by his pretensions in claptrap

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The film wants to play fast and loose but not offend the orthodox.

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such as *Map of the Human Heart*. Ward went to art school and is also an actor, and he exemplifies the dangers of a little learning. For the looks of this film he cannibalized the paintings of Botticelli, Bosch, Dieric Bouts, Caspar David Friedrich, Turner, Frederick Church, Albert Ryder, Thomas Cole, and George Inness—enough for a small museum, but too much for a mere movie. The otherwise perfectly commercial score by Michael Kamen prestigiously incorporates the second of Alfred Schnittke's *Three Sacred Hymns*. High aspirations, these, the better to hurtle from and self-destruct.

Chris and Annie Nielsen (earnest Robin Williams and adorable Annabella Sciorra) are a happily married couple: he a pediatrician, she a painter. Her painting of a Swiss landscape figures prominently in their happy home. They have a darling Dalmatian, Katie, which, alas, dies; two darling children, Ian and Marie, who, alas, die in a car crash. Annie attempts suicide, but Chris saves her by means of a picturesque sanatorium. Then he, alas, dies in a car crash (another one), and nobody can stop Annie from killing herself. He goes to heaven, but she is punished with hell.

What sort of heaven? Vincent Ward has said, "one of the great ideas behind this film is that . . . you create your own paradise, and it's whatever you want it to be." Ditto, in some ways, for hell. This is where the various painters come in, not to mention innovative technical effects too numerous to rehearse here. We start with

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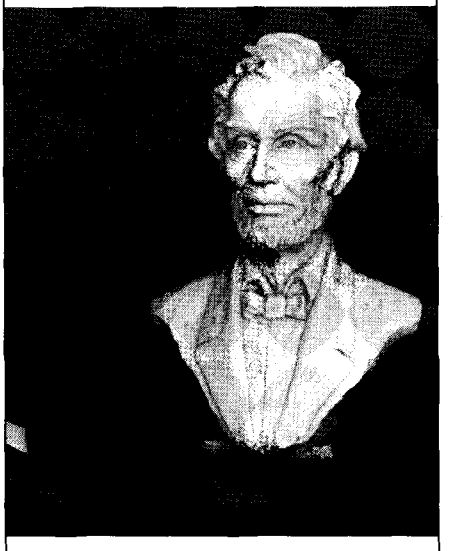

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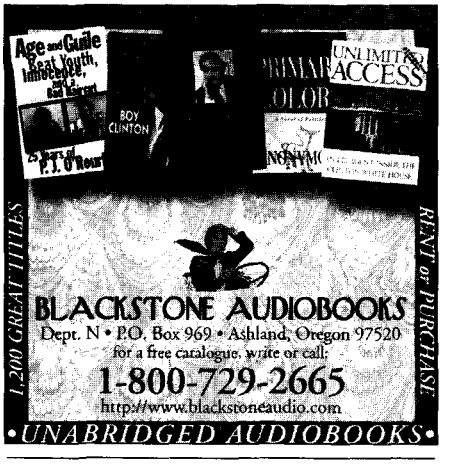

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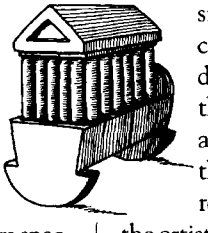
Chris's paradise, which is Annie's aforesaid painting, with the oil paint, for some reason, not yet dry on it, and proceed to various others. Chris gets an angelic guide, Albert (the black actor Cuba Gooding Jr.), who is really the heavenly reincarnation of someone Caucasian and extremely close to Chris, but I mustn't tell you who.

When Albert is otherwise engaged, he delegates his consort, Leona, to escort Chris. In the person of the Asian-American actress Rosalind Chao, she is really another Caucasian who, on earth, was extremely close to Chris and Annie. Let me state that the film is nowise linear, thus majestically transcending the merely confusing into the utterly chaotic. The chief anomaly (or asininity) is everyone's ending up in his private concept of heaven. This might pass if he were alone in it; but it is full of others entitled to their own different conceptions. So the film visually conflates various notions of afterlife into a composite heaven that is fish, fowl, and good red herring, and way, way too much.

As is obligatory in films of this nature, Max von Sydow shows up. He is an old man known as the Tracker, whom you might suppose to be God. Not so. When Chris asks Albert whether God exists, he is told, somewhat evasively, that he does exist all right, way up there somewhere—an absentee and, therefore, good (land)-Lord. Meretriciously, the film wants to play fast and loose but at the same time not offend the orthodox, placating them with a conciliatory crumb.

Hell is a veritable surfeit of inconsistencies. Albert tells Chris that no one can get there from heaven, but that it is not the conventional fiery furnace. When, however, the Tracker does lead Chris to Annie in hell—presumably thanks to the greatness of his marital love—we see some pretty standard flames. Next, some hideous, pretty standard devils. But also a sea of heads, forming a kind of moaning and recriminating carpet over which Chris galumphs, though at other times he can fly faster than a bird. The bodies belonging to the heads are stuck in mire, but at least one head still wears spectacles, no doubt a humiliating punishment for one who once enjoyed contact lenses.



The entrance to Annie's much nicer, private quarters in hell is guarded by what is either a giant, crumbling cement octopus, or a peculiar pipeline system for infernal drainage. Chris cannot help Annie beyond warmly comforting her, distraught as she is. But never fear, the loving couple is reincarnated on earth in young kids looking just like them, and embarking on a prepubescent love affair. Sitting through *What Dreams May Come* will at any rate spare you the effort of having to invent your own version of hell.

■ Scarcely less wonderful is ***Love Is the Devil***, written and directed by John Maybury and subtitled "Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon." This is another film full of hapless, albeit different, painterly excesses. We have moved from Bosch to Bacon, then onward to bosh. The film labors under two minor handicaps: a restricted budget forcing it to convey a trip to America with a mere Stars and Stripes waving in the background, and the Bacon estate's refusal to grant permission for the use of Bacon's paintings. A third and greater handicap is the unloveliness of the story and the unlikeableness of its characters.

Luckily the sexual practices Bacon and his lover, George Dyer, indulged in can only be suggested on screen. We see Bacon in his underwear kneeling by the bedside as George winds a leather belt around his hand and lights a cigarette, but not for smoking. We do see, however, how the two met. Dyer, a minor criminal, sets out to burglarize Bacon's studio *cum* lodging and crashes through the skylight. Bacon makes him an offer he can't refuse: sleep with him and take anything he likes.

Bacon abuses Dyer in different ways: reminding him of his lowly status, bullying him, humiliating him before his upper-class friends, locking him out when he, Bacon, sleeps with other men. Uninvited to a Bacon grand opening in Paris, Dyer dies, like Elvis, of a drug overdose while sitting on the toilet. But Maybury can redeem none of this by delving deeper into character and showing the connection between life and art. At most, he can suggest that a three-way mirror in Bacon's bathroom inspired the many triptychs the artist painted.

Initially an art student, Maybury was set and costume designer to the late Derek Jarman, maker of some of the dreariest and most homosexual art films, notably one about Caravaggio, more interested in his catamites than in his canvases. Maybury experiments with distortions of sight (e.g., shooting drinkers through a bottle) and sound (e.g., heightening the loudness of paint being stirred), and manages to make much of his film unwatchable and unlistenable to. As a result, even so fine an actor as Derek Jacobi cannot quite bring home the Bacon. **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Titanic Adventure, by Jennifer Carter & Joel Hirschhorn (New Horizon Press. 324 pp., $26.95)

THE *Titanic* seems permanently afloat with all the world aboard as if on the *Flying Dutchman*. Skepticism is to be expected at the prospect of yet another *Titanic* on the bookshelves, but this is an irresistible book, as readers would expect to hear from a reviewer who wrote the Foreword to the book and whose dive to examine the *Titanic* in 1987 happened aboard the principal author's watch. Jennifer Carter was in charge of the 50-man expedition that gave birth to a total of 35 dives down to the great depth (2.5 miles) where the spectral ruins lie, each dive lasting 9 hours (1.5 hours down, 6 hours exploring, 1.5 hours up). Mrs. Carter, a sometime bank clerk and full-time mother with near full-time experience as a diver and explorer, was from childhood entranced by the story of the *Titanic*. She was tapped to head up the great expedition that rescued a thousand artifacts from destruction, athwart the noisy interference from then-Sen. Lowell Weicker, who sponsored legislation to impede the critical exploration because of his devotion to submerged wrecks. Mrs. Carter had befriended a survivor of the *Titanic* and, in the 36 days aboard the mother vessel that hovered over the wreckage, dealt with problems grave and small including a hurricane, Telly Savalas, ethnic near-conflagrations, theft, and occasional despair. What emerged was not only the splendid collection of *Titanic*-ware, but the narrative of an enchanting woman with a shrewd eye for drama, excitement, archaeological lore, and low and high points in human behavior. These notes are from one beneficiary of her enthusiasm and care, but only one of many who will benefit from her adventures and from her storytelling gifts. —WM. F. BUCKLEY JR.

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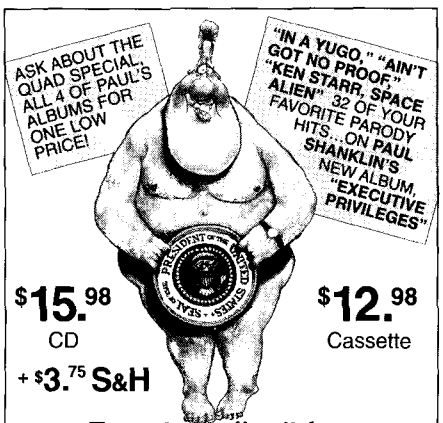
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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

There Goes The Neighborhood

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 9

The *nomenklatura* is moving pretty fast in the direction of—Clinton. Richard Brookhiser, in *The New York Observer*, spots it with a clean bullet. "The establishment has turned away from impeachment, yet 50 per cent of the public, according to polls, believes that if the President perjured himself he should be impeached."

Same journal, same issue, columnist Todd Gitlin, with day-before-yesterday's view of how the pundits were weighing in on Clinton–Lewinsky. "Not only in New York does our nonleading leading journalism inspire dismay. In Copenhagen, where I happened to be when Mr. Starr's report was released, journalists at the two leading dailies . . . asked me in considerable anguish to explain not only how Mr. Starr's inquisition could have gone so far but why the press was colluding in what they considered this blind and reckless sabotage of the world's lead government."

You want the feel of hard-tow strategic liberal opinion? Have a look at the front section of this week's *New Yorker*. The sound is of James Carville, if he woke up literate. The first editorial subhead is, "Has Starr humiliated us all?" (Answer: Yes.) The by-line is, no less, E. L. Doctorow (*Ragtime*), who informs us that every President lies to the American people, that in any case Clinton's lie "lacks grandeur," and that in Starr "two powerfully combined illiberal traditions" are at work: "the fundamentalist religious and the political far right," and these have "driven [him] past willfulness to obsession."

On to Cynthia Ozick, who deplores Starr's report as bad literature; Bobbie Ann Mason, who asks, "Shouldn't the punishment fit the crime?" (Answer: Yes); to William Styron, who is quite beside himself, speaking of Starr's "cruel and indefensible pillory" and of his report's "invincible repulsiveness." He has singled out the animating monster of it all. He recounts in contrast the happy atmosphere of the recent French court under Mitterrand, where nobody gives a whit that a mistress and bastard child are sitting about; not even, one supposes, the bastard. "What the French don't possess is the equivalent of the American South, where a strain of Protestant fundamentalism is so maniacal that one of its archetypal zealots, Kenneth Starr, has been able to nearly dismantle the Presidency because of a gawky and fumbling sexual dalliance." And note this, because the movement of elite opinion is very rapid right now, "Absent, too, from the French scene are media with fangs bared to go to work on the presidential throat." We have here a problem of an undistributed middle, as the logicians classify it. If the South alone is truly fired up about Clinton, how is it that the "media" in New York are so avid to do the work of the fundamentalist far-right South?

Where do Mr. Styron et al. get the impression that the Southerners are uniquely the *tricoteuses* waiting to see royal blood spill? Well now, I took the question to Dr. Gallup. And he did a regional poll released on October 7.

Question: Based on what you know at this point, do you think that Bill Clinton should or should not be impeached and removed from office?

South. Yes, should: 32 per cent.

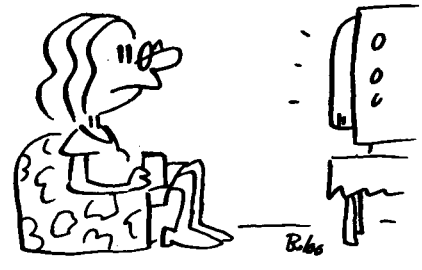
How does that question line up elsewhere?

Rocky Mountain is 34. Pacific is 29. Midwest is 34. New England is 29. Mid-Atlantic is 27.

In short, there is, statistically, zero difference on the question in the nation at large. The good old libertine "Pacific" is, at 29 per cent, only 3 points different from the South's 32 per cent, which is more latitudinarian than the Midwest's 34. Mr. Brookhiser's finding is the most tantalizing. "If the President perjured himself, 50 per cent want impeachment." But he *did* perjure himself, and that is not the finding of a crazed fundamentalist zealot. It is the finding of six months' research by a battery of lawyers. To question that Clinton committed perjury is more difficult than to maintain the innocence of O. J. Simpson. That innocence was proclaimed by a majority of black Americans because O.J. is a black American. The innocence of Mr. Clinton is asserted because Clinton is a Democratic President popularly elected. Would an impeachment and conviction reverse the will of the people?

"This childish objection," Mr. Brookhiser writes, "vanishes with a moment's thought. If Bill Clinton goes, Bob Dole is not shoved in in his place. A lot more people supported the Richard Nixon–Spiro Agnew ticket in 1972 than ever voted for Bill Clinton–Al Gore. Yet by 1975, the President and Vice President were Gerald Ford and Nelson Rockefeller, for whom no one had voted. No one, however, spoke of the will of the people being reversed, since they were two Republicans who had duly replaced their crooked Republican predecessors."

But Brookhiser is correct; the opinion leaders are gradually slipping away from reality, with which they are always uncomfortable.



"This is National Public Television—under fierce attack from the extreme right."

'Today's Papers,' Via *Slate*

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 5

I would like here to record the daily pleasure of something called Today's Papers.

It isn't properly a journal. It is an offshoot of *Slate* magazine. What is *Slate*? A complicated little beam of light in Bill Gates's galaxy. The thought a few years ago was: Why not have an opinion magazine that goes out over e-mail, saving the cost of paper, printing, and postage? It is an idea for which the French coined the perfect expression: a *fausse idée claire*. I.e., a terrific idea that doesn't work.

Doesn't work because not enough people (as yet) are prepared to haul their computers into service and turn-page their way through 30, 40, or 50 pages of commentary. What Gates did do was secure the services of Michael Kinsley, the ablest footloose editor in town, so what he got himself was a zesty magazine almost unread.

But along came a corollary idea. Wouldn't it interest readers to get some idea, every day, of how the country's five major newspapers had squared off to that day's news? Today's Papers was born, telling us what was the apportionment of space by the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *Los Angeles Times* to the principal events of the day. The chronicler is (usually) Scott Shuger, deft in condensing a story and finding iridescence. TP (Today's Papers) has generated other short features, which include Chatterbox (collecting spry asides from the day's news), and Flytrap, which is devoted to the volatility of the President's fly, and all that this bumps into.

—"An inside story in the *NYT* says that tomorrow, Amnesty International will pub-

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lish a harsh report condemning the U.S. police and criminal justice system for 'a persistent and widespread pattern of human rights violations.' The paper quotes the head of Amnesty International, who is from Senegal, as saying that 'it seems to me that the international community . . . is moving really ahead of the standards obtained in the United States today.' Hmmm . . . where would you rather be arrested, in the U.S. or Senegal?"

—"A George Washington University law student was unhappy about the lack of attention the school's student body has been getting from Prof. Jonathan Turley, who has been spending a lot of time lately on TV commenting on l'affaire Lewinsky (39 appearances between January and August). So the student devised a little experiment. Last month, he called Turley's office, leaving a message that he was a GWU student asking for an office appointment. Thirteen minutes later, his roommate called up, leaving a message falsely identifying herself as an ABC News producer. The 'producer's' call was returned in 32 minutes. The student's call was never returned."

The Commentariat is the name given to talk-show hosts who opine on the Sunday shows. The observations are shrewd and very tough. They quote Doyle McManus, of PBS's *Washington Week in Review*: "'You can see how Kenneth Starr . . . thought he had a big obstruction-of-justice case, but it melted away,' says McManus, struggling to find a new spin. . . . Ross Perot provides the opinion mafia with a mountain of nut fudge upon which to feast. Perot recently called the President mentally imbalanced . . . and compared his lust for power to that of Stalin, Hitler, Castro, and Saddam Hussein. The pundits fire back with a fusillade of 'the pot calling the kettle black' jokes about Perot's sanity."

—"Mark Shields Doesn't Double Dribble: Only because he doesn't dribble at all over the weekend. Tom Oliphant fills in for him on the *NewsHour* and Al Hunt takes his chair on *Capital Gang*. If Shields is ill, Pundit Central is certain that he's seeing everything twice."

But these days Flytrap is the big deal. However, "Flytrap fatigue has been spreading like wildfire across Europe. The German daily *Hamburger Morgenpost* lighted the flame last week by leaving two of its pages blank under the headline 'Clinton's Porn Interrogation: We Have Had Enough.'"

And on Friday, "Yesterday's reference in this space to 'some place called Carleton College' brought an avalanche of protesting e-mail. Most correspondents felt sure that they had encountered deep-seated elitism, when actually all that they had run into was a playful desire to keep the newspapers fun. It is perhaps a sign of the age that e-mailers defended the Northfield, Minnesota, school by citing its *U.S. News & World Report* ranking or by listing famous graduates, but no one wrote to say he or she'd gotten a great education at the place. Time to fill that void: Today's Papers did not go to Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. Today's Papers thoroughly enjoyed attending . . . Carleton College."

Cool cats, having a great time, and doing as much for the reader, and all you need to get it once a day is ask for it, www.slate.com. Today's Papers, it's called.

Gershwin? Who's Gershwin?

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 2

Much of the handwringing over student delinquency is critical of the students. And the obvious bears saying, that there is sloth among teenagers even as there is sloth among non-teenagers, and it's true that they can get away with it better as kids, because lazy grownups run into market disciplines. The ambitious student feels the equivalent of market forces if he is fighting for admission to a choosy college. But then those who do this aren't likely to be so lazy. The primary responsibility is that of the teachers, though parents must be held responsible for failing to discipline their children, and the society at large for the permissiveness that makes it difficult for parents to exercise their waning wills.

The National Center for Policy Analysis in Dallas, Texas, summoned a fortnight ago a "National Conference on School Choice." The invitation to participants began with a sentence that chills the blood. "Compared to other leading nations, the United States continues to finish dead last when it comes to education." The letter arrived coincidentally with a letter from a college instructor in art history in a privately administered, religiously oriented college in the Midwest. The writer wished to share with me the results of a test he gave the first day of class. The students were predominantly freshmen, but also included sophomores, juniors, and one senior.

1. *Name the most significant architect who created public buildings in the United States in the twentieth century*. Now the names of architects do not roll off the tongue, but an interest in learning about art history would suggest some exposure to architects. There were 27 students in the class. Twenty-three gave no answer. Four named Frank Lloyd Wright.

2. *Name the most acclaimed sculptor of the twentieth century*. Again, sculptors aren't household words. But they might expect to do a little better than: No answer, 25; Remington, 1; Michelangelo, 1.

3. *Name a winner of the Nobel Prize in the last 5 years (excluding Mother Teresa)*. The assumption is that everybody knows that Mother Teresa won a Nobel Prize—or was that Princess Diana? Answer: 26 blanks. One student gave the name "Dr. Smith." Research (not memory) informs me that Dr. Michael Smith won the 1993 Nobel Price in Chemistry. My dirty suspicion is that the student who gave that answer is Dr. Smith's grandchild.

4. *Name a composer of classical music who wrote music in the twentieth century*. Now here is knowledge one reasonably expects students to bump into, almost unguided. It requires dogged resolution to avoid coming across the name of Gershwin, for instance. Answers given: No answer, 22. Yanni, 1. (I do not recognize the name). Randy Rhoads, 1. (He is the late rock guitarist.) Beethoven, 2. (Beethoven died when John Quincy Adams was President.) Pavarotti, 1.

5. *Name an author who has received a Pulitzer Prize in the last five years*. Only three of the students came up with a name.

THE test was in two parts and the students came quickly to the show.

Name a TV series about the existence of aliens infiltrating the United States. Twenty-four students knew about *The X-Files*. Almost everybody came up with the name of a Spice Girl, though a mere 21 could give the name of the *Titanic* star.

These, then, are *college students*. The very best colleges have got used to the need to teach remedial reading and writing (50 per cent plus of students at the exclusive Berkeley are required to take remedial writing). The need seems to arise for remedial acculturation. As in, Who was the first President of the United States? That kind of thing. The conference brought together very big names from the concerned world over miseducation, including William Bennett, Steve Forbes, Congressmen Bill Archer, Dick Armey, Newt Gingrich, Jim Talent, and J. C. Watts, and Senators Coats, Coverdell, Lieberman, and Torricelli. The theme of the conference was, "Liberating America's children through school choice." The central assumption here is that parents want to send their children to schools that will acquaint them, before time to go off to college, with the existence of George Gershwin. The alternative is nightmare-time: If it is true that parents are satisfied with the performance of their public schools (of course, some public schools are superb—but what of such schools as graduated such students as filled out the questionnaires) then we are suffering the fruits of a second generation of under-education—parents who do not know what their children are not learning or else do not care.

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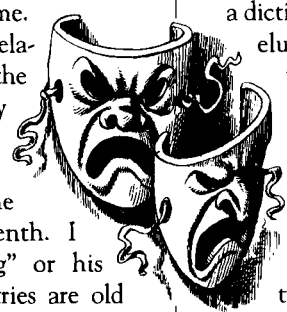
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

AN anonymous Englishman once said with charming accuracy that French sounds like a woman flirting with a man, Italian like a man flirting with a woman, Spanish like a saint praying to God, and German like a stableboy swearing at horses. How, then, do foreigners hear English? This question has intrigued me all my life.

Conducting experiments is a good way to go mad, and several times I almost have. I've tried self-hypnosis with Olivier's recordings, falling asleep to Churchill's recordings, and reciting the Gettysburg Address as fast as possible while drunk. Nothing worked; it still sounded like the same old native tongue to me.



Now at long last the revelation has come. Thanks to the Clinton scandals I not only have experienced English as a second language but as one somewhere in the neighborhood of fourteenth. I don't mean his "parsing" or his redefining of sex. Sophistries are old hat; what I'm talking about is the dawn of a whole new linguistic era.

Remember the flurry about whether UN Ambassador Bill Richardson was pressured by the White House to find a job for Monica Lewinsky in New York? At the Senate confirmation hearings for his new post as energy secretary Richardson was asked if the job he offered Monica had existed before he interviewed her, or if he had created it especially for her. Richardson swore it was an old job but UN sources said he created it, and that when the scandal broke in January he panicked and juggled his staff around to make it look as if the job had existed all along.

He was backed up by his chief of staff Rebecca Cooper, who satisfied my lifelong curiosity when she told the *Washington Times*:

> It's a fungible slot. You can trace a slot, but you can't say this person held that particular position because the position has evolved. It's such a nuance. What the senators were focused on—I mean, I gotta tell you, you're kind of getting into things that are really splitting hairs. People who held this job previously shouldn't regard themselves as the people who held the Monica slot. The job has evolved. All the allegations that people try to suggest, for example, that we created the job just for Monica, that doesn't hold up. Because regardless of Monica and prior to me ever knowing that Monica Lewinsky was ever going to be anyone in the newspaper, I continued to have that need and I filled it.

Welcome to the Age of the Fungible Nuance. Now that I've named it I'll have to define it, which is impossible. The Fungible Nuance will never be included in a dictionary of literary terms because it eludes the straightforward definitions required in reference books. Malapropisms are incorrect words that come in the middle of otherwise correct speech, such as "the clink in his armor." Spoonerisms, or the transposition of the letters or sounds of two words, come from the sermons of English clergyman William Spooner, who traded "a mess of pottage" for "a pot of message."

A Fungible Nuance does not come in the middle of anything except itself because its operative form is the circle. Like beachcombers playing with pebbles, Fungible Nuancers drop words into the speech pool and let them widen into sentences until they have a mess of pottage in a pot of message.

The easiest way to define it is to substitute sound for meaning. "Fungible" means interchangeable but it sounds like a gum disease. "Nuance" means a subtle degree of difference but it sounds like a gas leak. Both ooze.

The best Fungible Nuances are found in print because their baggy unwieldiness can defeat attempts to mine them for soundbites. Rather than cut through whale blubber with embroidery scissors, television producers murmur "Let go, let God" and pass the whole slab on to newspapers, whose readership is declining.

To spot a Fungible Nuance, look for high grammatical crimes, lots of perceive-for-see and purchase-for-buy misdemeanors, and a whiff of the occult. "The ambassador is not a personnel officer," said Bill Richardson's spokesman Calvin Mitchell. "He is not to sit in front of the Senate and answer questions off people's personnel files. And he described, in his mind, what the job was to him and how it was perceived and how it was going to function."

The more self-conscious Fungible Nuancers will suddenly drop an awkward, uncommon verb in the midst of softly lapping cliched sludge, like Barney Frank:

> If you're not going to tell the truth about the sex, if there are things you feel you can't tell the truth about, it's unrealistic to expect that you'd tell the truth to seven people. It's hard to segment that. And I also think, in this context, he did not set out to deliberately trap these people in deception. He himself was caught in a bad situation.

A FUNGIBLE Nuance need not be wordy. One tin-earred simile will suffice, as in Jesse Jackson's analysis of Chelsea Clinton's role: "In some sense, her knowledge of what has happened and yet her will to embrace them in the midst of it has been like a big piece of glue in this situation."

The worst Fungible Nuances resemble the "word salad" of schizophrenia or the cascades of Tourette's syndrome. Obsession–compulsion may also be a factor. Orrin Hatch must have been in the throes of "Step on a pronoun, break your mother's back" when he advised Clinton to seek help:

> There's no doubt in my mind that he has a problem, or problems, and that he needs some help with those problems and that he ought to get some help with those problems, because you can't keep doing things like this and have that kind of reckless conduct without it being a very serious problem.

The future of the Fungible Nuance was glimpsed when practitioners began to imitate their own incoherent rambling with onomatopoeic interjections. In her new book, *Bitch*, Elizabeth Wurtzel substitutes "blah-blah-blah" for arguments. Talk-show guests sum up their views with "yadda-yadda-yadda." And Lanny Davis, First Spinner, analyzed his psyche thusly: "I distinguish those feelings from other feelings of betrayal, anger, fill-in-the-blank." **NR**

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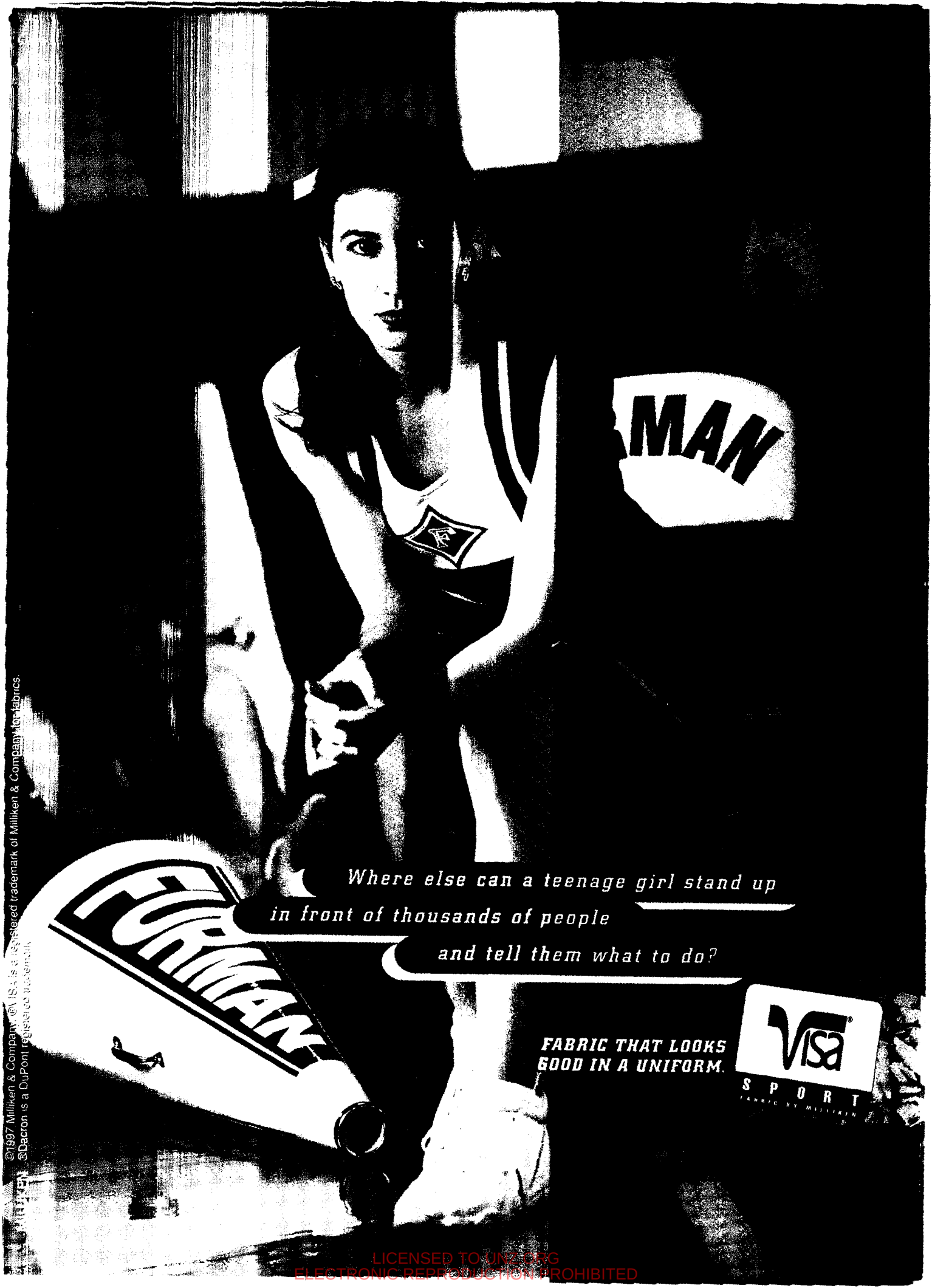
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